The Jerry Rescue

October 1, 1851

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"To keep green in memory the heroism of the men who rescued Jerry—men who could not look on a slave—I give six hundred dollars to the Onondaga Historical Association, to be known as the Jerry Rescue Fund; the interest of which shall be used every five years to procure some person to deliver a Jerry Rescue oration on October 1st."—From the will of Alfred Mercer, M. D., who died August 5, 1914.

ADDITIONAL JERRY RESCUE DOCUMENTS

And Rescue of Harriet Powell in Syracuse, September, 1839.

Collected and Edited by Franklin H. Chase,
Secretary of the Onondaga Historical Association.

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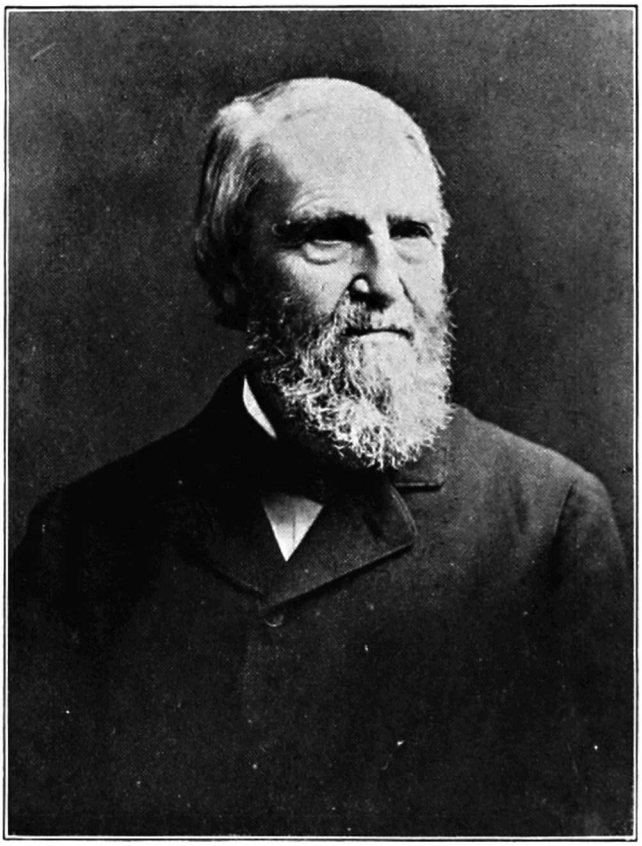

ALFRED MERCER, M. D.

Who Remembered in His Will "To Keep Green in Memory Heroism of the Men Who Rescued Jerry"

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The Jerry Rescue

WHY THE JERRY RESCUE BECAME HISTORIC.

The incident known as the Jerry Rescue, though seemingly a trivial event, derives significance and value from its relation to the great historic forces of its day. The conflict of ideas concerning slavery was in 1851 moving swiftly and irresistibly toward a prolonged and bloody conflict of arms. The provisions of the Fugitive Slave Law, and the forcible seizure of Jerry from the hands of the United States marshal stand forth in American history as early and pre-eminent manifestations of the irreconcilable spirit which led to the great disaster.

The action of Jerry's rescuers, on the other hand, strengthened and intensified the very forces, which had produced it. The dramatic story was telegraphed throughout the Union. In the North, where the Fugitive Slave Law was justly and cordially detested, the rescue of the slave was applauded for its courage and humanity. In the South, where attention was centered on the property rights of Jerry's owner, and on the obligation of all citizens to obey a Federal statute, it was denounced as lawless and violent, which it unquestionably was. It thus helped to harden determination both in the South and in the North; in the South, a resolve that property in escaped slaves should be recovered by the enforcement of the law; in the North, a resolve that certain provisions of the law should not be obeyed at any cost. It was thus a result of that bad feeling between the North and South, which had been engendered chiefly by slavery, and at the same time a cause, which helped to rouse this bad feeling to the point of belligerency. From the standpoint of national history, it was without doubt the most important incident in the annals of Syracuse.

To understand fully the Jerry Rescue, which is our present purpose, we must review briefly its historical background and the remoter causes which produced it. When slavery was introduced into the American colonies in 1619 by the landing of a cargo of slaves in Virginia, all the European nations traded in negroes, and in spite of the century long disapproval of the church, the conscience of people generally had not been so stirred as to cause more than sporadic objection to slavery. By 1776 slaves were held in every one of the thirteen colonies. Their number was small in the North, where they were usually employed as house servants; but in the southern colonies, where labor was scarce and where the climate made toil out of doors almost unendurable for the whites, they multiplied rapidly.

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OPPOSITION TO SLAVERY CAME EARLY

Vigorous opposition to slavery, however, appeared early in American history. It was prohibited in Georgia, when that colony was founded in 1733, but was introduced later through the influence of George Whitefield, who believed that the negro was not as yet fit for freedom, and that slavery was a training school for him. John Wesley, on the other hand, who also lived for a time in the colonies, believed it a sin against God and man. Many slaveholders, both North and South, recognized the evils of the institution and hoped for its eradication from the United States. Washington, for example, disliked slavery and provided in his will that his slaves should be set free after the death of his wife. Jefferson believed that slavery was contrary to every principle of human justice and could not endure forever. He even went so far as to introduce into the Virginia legislature a bill providing for the gradual emancipation of slaves. George Mason of Virginia, a member of the convention which drafted the Constitution of the United States, denounced slavery in the following vigorous terms: "Slavery discourages arts and manufactures. The poor despise labor when performed by slaves. Slaves prevent the immigration of whites. Every master of slaves is born a petty tyrant. Slaves bring the judgment of heaven on a country."

The early opponents of slavery were much encouraged by the fact that the northern states had begun to abolish it soon after the Declaration of Independence. The Massachusetts constitution of 1780 declared all men to be born free and equal, and this declaration was held to abolish slavery within that state. In the same year Pennsylvania provided for gradual abolition. New York in 1799 declared that all children of slaves born after July 4th of that year should be free, though held for a long time as apprentices, and in 1827 that state legislature swept away the last remnants of slavery. New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New Jersey followed the example of these states. In Virginia and Kentucky there was some talk of abolition, and some slave owners joined the African colonization society founded in 1816 to assist the negroes in returning to Africa to found there free colonies.

In 1787 the Congress elected under the Articles of Confederation, which were just about to be superseded by the newly framed constitution, passed one of its wisest measures, the famous Ordinance of 1787. This consisted of a body of laws, with the preparation of which the members from Virginia had much to do, for the government of the Northwest Territory. This region included the present states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin. In all this region the Ordinance forever prohibited negro slavery.

CHANGING SENTIMENT ON SLAVERY

All this legislation was the result of a change in sentiment concerning slavery, which followed the American Revolution. Many

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able men came to oppose it, because they thought it bad for both blacks and whites. But the anti-slavery sentiment in the convention which framed the constitution in 1787 was not sufficiently powerful to control the action of that body. The delegates of South Carolina declared that slavery was absolutely essential to the existence of plantations and that its abolition would mean ruin for the South. They also strongly objected to legislation prohibiting the importation of slaves on the ground that the number of deaths every year in the rice swamps made it necessary for the planters to have new supplies constantly. The belief prevalent in the far South was in general that slavery on the whole was good for the negroes as well as for the planters. The controversies on questions relating to slavery came near disrupting the convention and preventing thus the framing of a new constitution. But on these questions, as on others, compromises were at last attained and slavery given a definite legal status by the constitution. The constitutional provisions concerning it are in substance as follows: That the importation of slaves from abroad should not be prohibited before 1808; that the slave states should be given representation in the new House of Representatives for three-fifths of their slaves; that slaves escaping into other states should be returned to their masters when properly claimed. In accordance with these provisions, the new Congress enacted in 1793 the first Fugitive Slave Law, and in 1808 the further importation of slaves was forbidden. With slavery in the states the constitution did not interfere.

After these legislative and constitutional arrangements had been made the hope was that slavery would not become an issue in national politics, and during the opening years of the nineteenth century this hope was largely realized. The great mass of the American people apparently did not think very much about slavery. A few Quakers presented a petition directed against it to the first Congress, which met under the new constitution, but most citizens believed that it was a question which the states should settle for themselves.

SLAVERY BECAME POLITICAL ISSUE

It was impossible, however, to prevent slavery from becoming a political issue and a decisive influence in the life of the Union. In several ways it became necessarily and unavoidably a national problem. When a new state was to be admitted to the Union the question inevitably arose in Congress whether it should be a free or a slave State. Whenever new regions were acquired or new territorial governments organized by Congress, the question came up as to whether slavery should be prohibited or not. In connection with this question there originated a controversy as to whether Congress even had the power, under the constitution, to abolish or prevent slavery in the territories. Since Congress had full power to govern the District of Columbia, abolitionists demanded that it should at least abolish slavery in the national capital.

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The Constitution provided that slaves escaping from their masters into other States should be delivered up on claim of their owners. The citizens of the free States disliked very much to see "slave catching" carried on around them, even if they were not much disturbed by slavery some hundreds of miles away. In this connection there arose the question as to how far the Federal government should go in assisting to return runaway slaves to their owners. Finally, the extreme abolitionists demanded immediate emancipation, in spite of the constitution, which recognized the existence in the Southern states as lawful. Some of them even advocated the secession of the free States from what they called an unholy union with slave States.

HOW SLAVERY BECAME AN ISSUE

It was in the manner first mentioned, the admission of a new State into the Union, that slavery first became an issue under the Constitution. In 1818 Missouri applied for admission to the Union. It contained many slaves because settled largely by emigrants from southern States, who had brought their slaves with them. Their right to do this had not been questioned, and when they sought admission to the Union they assumed as a matter of course that Missouri would be a slave State. There were, however, many opponents of slavery in Congress and they were determined that Missouri should not be admitted as a slave State. They believed slavery an evil, and that it would be an injury to the new State; they were unwilling to see it extended beyond the Mississippi. The Union now consisted, moreover, of eleven free States and eleven slave States. If Missouri was admitted, it was argued, the free States would be outnumbered; the slave States would have the larger representation in Congress, could extend slavery at will, repeal the protective tariff to which they were opposed, and permit the free importation of manufactured goods, which might close the mills and factories of the North. The South, on the other hand, argued that its prosperity depended on the extension of slave labor and on free trade with Europe. Its spokesmen asserted that the North was rapidly outstripping the South in population, and that if Missouri were admitted as a free State, the opponents of slavery would have a majority both in the Senate and the House of Representatives. Neither side would give way to the other and for two years a deadlock ensued, the question being angrily debated during that time in Congress.

Just at this time, fortunately, Maine, which formerly had been part of the State of Massachusetts, applied for admission to the Union. The opportunity for a bargain was quickly seized by Henry Clay, who prepared the Missouri Compromise Bill, which was passed by Congress. The terms of the Compromise were as follows: The North agreed that Missouri should enter the Union as a slave State. The South agreed that it would no longer oppose the admission of

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Maine, which of course came in as a free State. The South agreed that the remainder of the Louisiana territory north of the parallel of 36° 30′ should forever be free, that is, that new States organized within the limits of this territory should come into the Union as free States. This was really a great gain for the friends of freedom, because the area won for liberty was several times the size of the region left for slavery. Moreover, the principle was once more approved, that Congress could abolish slavery in the territories belonging to the United States.

BELIEVED MISSOURI COMPROMISE HAD SETTLED IT

There was widespread belief that the Missouri Compromise had settled for all time the question concerning the extension of slavery, and for some years to come the slavery issue did indeed pass into the background of National politics. But when the discussion was once more renewed, it never ceased, until the North and South settled it by arms on the battlefield. The renewal was caused chiefly by the agitation of that fierce champion of freedom for the black man, William Lloyd Garrison. On New Year's Day, 1831, appeared the first number of his paper, the "Liberator," bearing at its head the motto, "Our country is the world—our countrymen all mankind." Mr. Garrison was its editor, owner, publisher, printer and carrier. The "Liberator" demanded the "immediate and unconditional emancipation of every slave held in the United States." In an address to the public in the first number Garrison used these words: "I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—*and I will be heard.*"

The group of radical agitators which followed Garrison soon encountered bitter opposition in the North as well as in the South. While no doubt few citizens in either section would have voted to establish slavery, if it had not already existed, the majority of them took little or no interest in abolition. Many feared that if the North opposed slavery the Southern States might secede, and thus break up the Union, which had been constructed with so much labor and sacrifice. But Garrison was determined to free the negro even if he had to destroy the Union to do it, and he violently denounced the Constitution because of its recognition of slavery as "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell."

FACED MOBS AND RIOTS

The opponents of abolition stirred up riots against Garrison and his followers and sometimes mobbed them when they attempted to state their views in public. In 1835 a howling mob dragged Garrison through the streets of Boston with a rope around his body. Two years later, Lovejoy, another anti-slavery leader, was killed at Alton, Illinois, and his printing press smashed. These violent

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outbreaks were not made because of hatred to the negro, but because of the fear that the agitators were endangering the existence of the Union. Many opponents of slavery believed that, on the whole, it was better to save the Union with slavery than to destroy it for the sake of liberating the negro.

The agitators were not daunted by mobs. They prepared books, pamphlets and leaflets depicting the evils of slavery and sent their publications through the mails all over the South. They formed anti-slavery societies, which within a few years numbered nearly 2,000. They prepared petitions against slavery in the territories, in the District of Columbia, and in the Southern States as well, and secured thousands of signatures. These they dispatched to Congress from every direction. Southern representatives in Congress insisted that it was an insult to them to receive such petitions, and demanded that the practice be stopped. In 1836 the House of Representatives resolved that while it could not prevent anti-slavery agitators from circulating petitions and presenting them, it would prevent the reading of these petitions. Ex-President John Quincy Adams, then a member of the House of Representatives, denounced these resolutions as "gag rules," which forbade debate, and were contrary to that provision of the Constitution guaranteeing to the people the right of petition. He insisted on presenting every petition that was sent to him, and sometimes offered 200 or more in a single day. Hundreds of others were thrown into the waste basket when they were received. For nearly ten years Adams continued to protest against this treatment of petitions, and finally in 1844 the practice was abandoned.

THE NEW TEXAS COMPLICATED THINGS

Shortly after the abolition movement had begun there arose a vital question of practical politics, which opened yet wider the rift between the North and the South. In 1836 the Mexican territory now known as Texas, which had become the home of many Americans, seceded from Mexico, declared its independence in the next year, and sought admission to the Union as a State. Jackson hesitated about annexation and there was indeed good reason for delay, for the people of the United States were divided as to the wisdom and justice of the course, which the Americans in Texas had pursued. Garrison declared that the conduct of his countrymen in Texas had been outrageous and urged the Northern States to separate from the South and form a free country if Texas was brought into the Union as a slave State. Adams also opposed annexation, declaring that the revolution, which had freed Texas from Mexico, was a slave owners' plot to seize the territory of a friendly State and increase the slave power in the United States. Calhoun, on the other hand, argued that the admission of Texas was absolutely necessary to the preser-

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vation of the Union. It would give the slave-holding States, he said, a balance of power in the country as against the States of the North, which were rapidly growing in wealth and population; for the plan of the South was that a number of slave States should be made out of the vast Texas territory. President Van Buren was a Northern man, opposed to slavery, and during his administration from 1837 to 1841 the admission of Texas was out of the question. It is not probable that the Whig President, William Henry Harrison, would have brought Texas into the Union had he lived to serve out his term. But he died after he had been in office for a few weeks and the Vice-President, Tyler, succeeded him. Tyler was from Virginia. He was at heart a Democrat and he favored slavery. In 1844 he appointed to the office of Secretary of State John C. Calhoun, who at once made a treaty with Texas providing for its annexation to the United States. This treaty, however, did not receive the required two-thirds vote in the Senate. The advocates of annexation then discovered another means to accomplish their purpose. They pushed through both houses of Congress a joint resolution which required only a majority vote, admitting Texas to the Union. This was in February, 1845.

THEN CAME WAR WITH MEXICO

No sooner was Texas admitted than a war began with Mexico over its southern boundary. From the beginning the outcome of the war was not in doubt at any time and the opponents of slavery had very early determined to make every effort to exclude it from any territory, which might be acquired outside of Texas. As the troops of the United States occupied California and New Mexico in 1846, it was evident that such acquisitions might be extensive, and in the North Whigs and Democrats alike were anxious that the new territories should be kept free. Accordingly, early in August, 1846, when Congress was considering an appropriation of $2,000,000 requested by President Polk "for the settlement of the boundary question with Mexico," the advocates of free soil in Congress took action. David Wilmot of Pennsylvania offered an amendment to the appropriation bill, which became famous as the Wilmot proviso. Following the language of the Ordinance of 1787, it provided that in any territories that might be acquired from Mexico, neither slavery nor involuntary servitude should exist except for conviction for crime. The proviso passed the House, but was defeated in the Senate. The debate on the proviso and the attitude taken by both advocates and opponents roused to a high pitch political passions both in North and South.

By 1849 an intense and profound excitement had settled down on the entire country. The difficulty experienced by Congress in fixing on a policy concerning the admission of slavery into new territories, the breakup of the old parties shown by the campaign of 1848,

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the rising free-soil spirit in the North, the increasing pro-slavery aggressiveness of the South, were evidently bringing the whole matter to a critical issue. The sectional lines of the contest had first been sharply drawn during the discussion on the admission of Texas to the Union. "Texas or disunion" was the threat which the hotheads among the southern annexationists had ventured to utter. And some of the northern Whigs had not hesitated to join John Quincy Adams in declaring to their constituents that in their opinion the annexation of Texas would cause and fully justify the dissolution of the Union.

GOLD DISCOVERIES BRING NEW POLITICAL CRISIS

The controversy was hurried on to a new political crisis by the discovery of gold in California in 1848. From every quarter of the country a great population of pioneers poured into California, improvising laws, establishing a crude administration and almost unconsciously creating a great frontier state. President Taylor thought that the simplest way out of the difficulty of organizing governments in the new possessions was for the settlers there to form constitutions for themselves and come into the Union with institutions of their own choosing. The people of California acted under his direction, and in the autumn of 1849 a constitution was framed which prohibited slavery. This action was taken in accordance with the principles held by a numerous group both in the North and the South. They believed that Congress had no right to meddle with slavery, that the people of each territory should be permitted to decide for themselves whether or not they would have slavery. This was the doctrine of popular or of "squatter" sovereignty. Two other methods of settling the question of slavery in new territories were proposed. The extreme Southern men said, "Every citizen of the United States has the right to go to any part of the country he pleases, and take his property, including his negroes, with him. Give us that right and we ask no more." But the abolitionists, the free soil men, like the advocates of the Wilmot proviso, answered, "We will have no more slave States. All territory must come in free." None of these methods satisfied both sections of the country, but unless some agreement could be reached the Union might be broken up. During all the autumn of 1849, indeed, Southern governors were talking plainly to their legislatures about secession, and although the legislatures refrained from every extreme policy, their members expressed opinions which caused the deepest anxiety among all friends of the Union. Congress of course was rent in twain, with secession sentiment strong among the Southern extremists. In this time of peril Henry Clay came forward in January, 1849, with his second great compromise, that of 1850. It embraced the follow-

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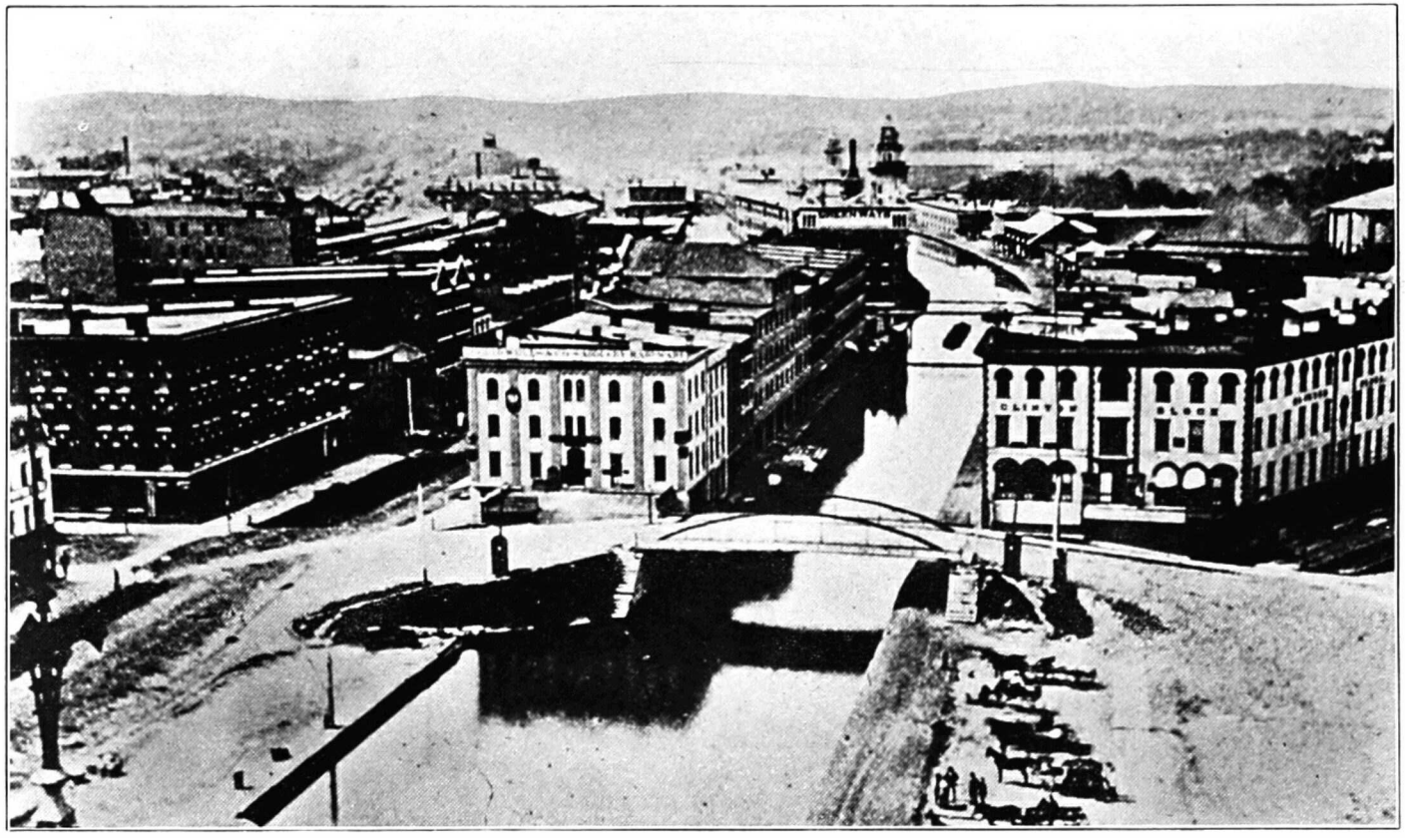

JERRY RESCUE (RAYNOR) BLOCK IN 'EIGHTIES

Picture made before overhead bridge beside Jerry Rescue Block in center was taken down. It was upon an overhead bridge that crowd gathered at time of the rescue. Picture shows how main entrance to building, where rescue took place, was from the incline of the bridge upon platform to the second story of the block.

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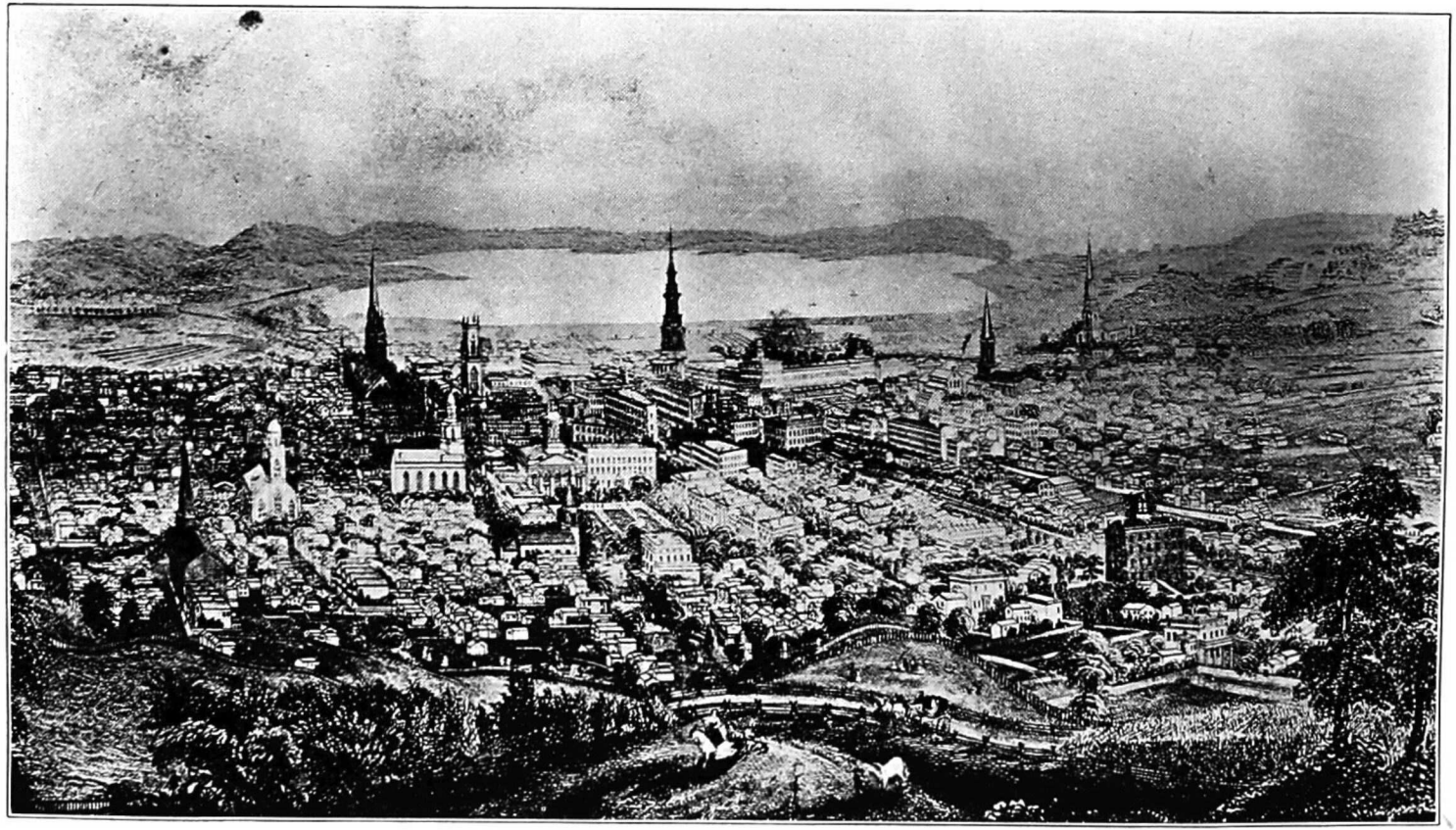

BIRDSEYE VIEW OF SYRACUSE AT THE TIME OF JERRY RESCUE

Picture from engraving in which are readily distinguishable: First Baptist Church spire, center; St. Paul's and First Presbyterian tower and spire to left; Empire House to right; old depot, Granger Block, Park and First M. E. Churches near center, and old academy, later orphan asylum, in right foreground.

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ing propositions: That California should be admitted as a free State; that the slave trade, though not slavery itself, should be abolished in the District of Columbia; that to all the rest of the territory obtained from Mexico the principle of popular sovereignty should be applied—that is, the people should determine for themselves whether they should have free labor or slave labor; that a new Fugitive Slave Law should be enacted, under which runaway slaves found in the North could be arrested, and without trial by jury returned to their masters. Clay's compromise had been framed with the obvious purpose of winning votes from all parties in Congress. The anti-slavery men would support the admission of California as a free State and the abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia; the advocates of popular sovereignty would vote for the application of their principle to the new territory obtained from Mexico, and the slaveholders would be won by the new Fugitive Slave Law. But while there was a majority for each of these proposals separately, perhaps, the compromise as a whole could not be passed at first. For a year and eight months it was debated in Congress and throughout the nation. It was evident that the people of each section would have to yield on some points, in order to prevent war, and by September of 1850 the following settlement was reached: California was admitted as a free State; the buying and selling of slaves was abolished in the District of Columbia, though slavery itself was continued there. The voters in the territories of New Mexico and Utah, formed from cessions made by Mexico, were to choose for themselves between freedom and slavery; Congress was to enact a strict Fugitive Slave Law which would make it easier for slave owners to recover their escaped property.

BROUGHT NO "UNION OF HEARTS"

This great compromise failed to bring about the "union of hearts," as Clay had hoped. For a short time after the passage of the measures included in it the country was tranquil, but the quiet was simply the lethargy of reaction. There was on all hands an anxious determination to be satisfied—to keep still, and not arouse again the terrible forces of disruption which had so startled the country during the recent legislative struggle—but nobody was really satisfied. That the leaders who were responsible for the compromise were profoundly uneasy was soon manifest to everybody. Mr. Webster went about anxiously reproving agitation. These measures of accommodation between the two sections, he insisted, were a new compact, a new stay and support for the constitution, and no one who loved the constitution and the Union ought to dare to touch them. Mr. Clay took similar ground. Good resolutions were everywhere made to keep down agitation.

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But the Fugitive Slave Law steadily defeated these purposes of peace. Doubtless it would have been impossible to frame any law which would have been palatable to the people of the free States. But the new law seemed to embrace as many irritating provisions as possible. In order to meet the views of the Supreme Court, the whole duty of enforcing the act was put upon officers of the United States. Warrant for the arrest or removal of a fugitive slave was to proceed in every case from a judge or commissioner of the United States; this warrant was to be executed by a U. S. marshal, who could not refuse to do so under a penalty of $1,000, and who would be held responsible under his official bond for the full value of any slave who should escape from his custody. All good citizens were required to assist in the execution of the law, when called upon to do so, and a heavy fine, besides civil damages to the owner of the slave, was to be added to six months imprisonment for any assistance given the fugitive or any attempt to effect his rescue. The simple affidavit of the person who claimed the negro was to be sufficient evidence of ownership, sufficient basis for the certificate of the court or commissioner, and this certificate was to be effective against the operation of the writ of habeas corpus. The law, moreover, was energetically and immediately put into operation by the slave owners. In some cases negroes who had long since escaped into the Northern States and who had settled and married there, were seized upon the affidavit of their former owners and by force of the federal government carried away into slavery again. The North was filled with wrath, and many men who had never disobeyed an act of Congress refused to send back the fugitive slaves. In many a city and village, where people had previously thought very little about slavery, they were now deeply stirred by seeing federal officers capture and handcuff negroes and drive them through the streets on their way South to their former owners. Thousands who formerly had had no opinion about slavery were now opposed to it.

LAWS TO PROTECT NEGROES

The legislatures of several Northern States now passed laws to protect negroes and prevent their being sent back to slavery. Sympathizers with the slaves laid out certain routes known as "underground railroads" from village to village, over which the slaves might escape, and selected in each place one or two trusted families as guards. They sent agents into the South to bring slaves into free States, and then carried them at night along these routes, hiding them in the daytime in cellars and garrets at the homes of the keepers of the "underground stations." Hundreds, if not thousands of slaves owed their liberty to the speed and secrecy of this peculiar system of travel.

The City of Syracuse had an active part in the shaping and operation of these historic forces. It was the chief point in Central

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New York for anti-slavery agitation. It had an active group of abolitionists of the Garrison type. It was a center for the liberty party. Within its limits was one of the busiest stations on the underground railway. Many of its leading citizens made a vigorous protest against the Fugitive Slave Law, and in defiance of Congress organized to defeat its execution. And in Syracuse, finally, occurred the most famous rescue of an escaped slave, except perhaps that of the negro, Shadrach, in Boston.

IN SYRACUSE IN THE 'THIRTIES

During the early "thirties", however, Syracuse had not attained its later position in the van of progressive thought on slavery. Its political and clerical leaders, like those in other parts of the North, endeavored to repress agitation against slavery, because they feared the results. The testimony of the Reverend Samuel J. May concerning this condition is so appropriate and so illuminating that the following portion of it deserves quotation here: "The most serious obstacle to the progress of the anti-slavery cause was the conduct of the clergy and churches in our country. Perhaps it would be more proper to say the churches and the clergy, for it was only too obvious that, in the wrong course which they took, the shepherds were driven by the sheep." The influential members of the churches—"the gentlemen of property and standing"—still more the politicians, who, "of course understood better than ministers the Constitution of the United States, and the guarantees that were given to slaveholders by the framers of our Union"—these gentlemen, too important to be alienated, were permitted to direct the action of the churches, and the preaching of their pastors on this "delicate question," "this exciting topic." Consequently the histories of the several religious denominations in our country (with very small exceptions) evince from the time of our Revolution a continual decline of respect for the rights of colored persons, and of disapproval of their enslavement. In the early days of our Republic—until after 1808—all the religious sects in the land, I believe, gave more or less emphatic testimonies against enslaving fellow-men, especially against the African slave trade. But after that accursed traffic was nominally abolished, the zeal of its opponents subsided (not very slowly) to acquiescence in the condition of those who had long been enslaved and their descendants. "They are used to it," "they seem happy enough," "unconscious of their degradation," it was said. Then "the labor of slaves is indispensible to their owners, especially on the rich virgin soils of the Southern States." "It is sad," said the semi-apologists, "but so it is. The condition of laboring people everywhere is hard and we are by no means sure that the condition of the slaves is worse, if so bad, as that of many laborers elsewhere, who are nominally free." "Many masters," it was added, "are

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very kind to their slaves; feed them and clothe them well, and never overwork them, unless it is absolutely necessary." But the consciences of the doubting were quieted more than all by the plea that "in one respect certainly the condition of the enslaved Africans has been immensely improved by their transportation to our country. Here they are introduced to the knowledge of 'the way of salvation,' here many of them become Christians. As Joseph through his bondage in Egypt was led to the highest position in that empire, next only to the king, so these poor, benighted heathen, by being brought in slavery to our land, may be led to become children of the king of kings, so wonderful are the ways of Divine Providence." By these and similar palliations and apologies, the people of almost every religious sect at the South, and their Methodist or Baptist or Presbyterian or Episcopalian brethren at the North, were led to overlook the essential evil, the tremendous wrong of slavery, and to hope and trust that God would, in due time, by His inscrutable method, bring some inestimable good thing out of this great evil.

PALLIATING THE "SUM OF ALL VILLAINIES"

Accordingly we find, on turning to the doings of the great ecclesiastical bodies of our country, that they have descended from their very distinct protests against the enslavement of men in 1780, 1789, 1794, etc., to palliations of the "sum of all villainies," as Wesley called it, and apologies for it, and justifications of it, and explicit biblical defenses of it, until at length—after Mr. Garrison and his co-laborers arose, demanding for the slaves their inalienable right to liberty—the churches and ministers of all denominations (excepting the Freewill Baptists and the Scotch Covenanters) gathered about the "Peculiar Institution" for its protection, and vehemently denounced as incendiaries, disunionists, infidels, all those who insisted upon its abolition.

"This, I repeat, was the most serious obstacle to the progress of our anti-slavery reform. In 1830, and for several years afterwards, the influence of the clergy and the churches was paramount in our Northern, if not in the Southern communities; certainly it was second only to the love of money. The people generally, then, were wont to take for granted that what the ministers and church members approved must be morally right, and what they so vehemently denounced must be morally wrong. Accordingly the most violent conflicts we had, and the most outrageous mobs we encountered, were led on or instigated by persons professing to be religious." —"Some Recollections of Our Anti-Slavery Conflict." Samuel J. May; pp. 329-331.

These general conditions (thus described by the Rev. Mr. May) received striking illustration from events in Syracuse. In 1835 opponents of slavery in Onondaga County assembled to form an anti-

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

slavery society. Among the speakers on this occasion were Gerrit Smith, Alvan Stewart and Beriah Green. Some of the Syracusans who opposed the plan were Thomas T. Davis, Judge Daniel Pratt, John Wilkinson and Vivus W. Smith. These men with a crowd of sympathizers attended the anti-slavery meeting for the purpose of preventing the formation of a society. Judge Pratt made a lengthy speech in opposition and was followed by Mr. Davis and Mr. Wilkinson. When an attempt was made to vote on the question whether an organization should be formed, there came an outburst of loud cries and disorder, which prevented the taking of a vote. The pro-slavery intruders were not numerous enough in the meeting to outvote the anti-slavery men, but by means of obstruction could prevent a vote being taken. The abolitionists, however, were not so easily defeated, and on the same day went to Fayetteville, where they organized an anti-slavery society.

ASSAILING THE ABOLITIONISTS

It was during these days that Gerrit Smith, William Lloyd Garrison and others, who spoke in Syracuse, were insulted and repulsed. Yet in spite of all opposition, their efforts bore fruit; many were convinced of the justice of their demands and of the disastrous influence of slavery, and the community came gradually to respect the right of anyone to hold anti-slavery meetings. Among the results which followed this early change of sentiment in Syracuse was a schism in the First Presbyterian Church and in the Methodist Church. Dr. Adams, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, and many of his congregation, were conservative in opinion, and strongly opposed to abolition, while other members of the congregation adopted anti-slavery views. The more progressive group became so restive that they seceded from the church, organized a society with the Congregational form of government and erected a church building on East Genesee Street next to the Courier building. This old Congregational Church became the center of the anti-slavery movement in city and county, was the usual meeting place for the Liberty Party in Central New York, and welcomed to its platform nearly all the leading scholars, philanthropists and reformers of the day. Among them were Garrison, Douglas, Isaac F. Hopper, Samuel R. Ward, Horace Mann and Susan B. Anthony.

The Methodist Church underwent a similar division, the first pastor of the anti-slavery Methodists being the Rev. Luther Lee. An incident, which is believed to have strengthened anti-slavery sentiment in Syracuse, occurred in 1839. In September of that year there came to Syracuse a Mississippi planter named Davenport. With him were his wife and a second lady, named Harriet Powell, of fair complexion, good looks and handsomely dressed, who was never introduced to strangers and who proved to be a slave. A

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

colored waiter at the Syracuse House planned her escape. She suddenly vanished one evening and a quick search of abolitionists' houses in Syracuse, Skaneateles and Peterboro yielded no trace. With the aid of Abraham Nottingham of Dewitt the girl had been secreted at the farm of a Mr. Sheperd, near Marcellus. Treachery nearly led to her capture and she escaped only because of the prompt action of abolitionists, who met at the Congregational Church, raised money for her transportation and arranged that she be hidden at various points near Syracuse until she could be sent to Kingston.

VIEWS BEGAN TO CHANGE

This and other causes, chief among them agitation by the state abolition society, with its speakers and printed matter in various forms, produced a great change in the views and feelings of Syracusans. When the Rev. Samuel J. May became a resident of the city in April, 1845, he found many abolitionists in the Unitarian Church and several in the Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist Churches. Some of the most prominent and highly respected citizens were anti-slavery, and Davis, Wilkinson and Smith had been converted to the new views. Judge Daniel Pratt, however, was obdurate and did not change his opinions.

Syracuse during these years was one of the favorite stations on the "underground railroad." Several people here assisted the escaped slaves, the chief being the Rev. Samuel J. May and the Rev. J. W. Loguen. Mr. May received many fugitives, who came to him at all hours of the day and night, were given shelter, food and clothing when necessary, and directed on their way. He sheltered slaves from such various points as Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee and Louisiana. The inconvenience was so great at times that an association was formed, which included business men and bankers, to provide the funds necessary for his work. An arrangement was made with the Rev. J. W. Loguen to fit up suitably an apartment in his house at the northeast corner of East Genesee and Pine Streets for the accommodation of the fugitives. Mr. Loguen sacrificed not only time and convenience in this work, but money also, and with Samuel R. Ward, another able and eloquent colored man, was at the head of the "underground" in Syracuse. Canada was the northern destination of the refugees, and on two visits there the Rev. Mr. May found them living comfortably with few exceptions. Many negroes remained in Syracuse, and the city directory for the year 1852 gives the names of 97 in a list headed "colored persons"; others were here, probably the greater part of them escaped slaves.

ANTAGONISM OF FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

In such a center of anti-slavery activity as Syracuse it was inevitable that the Fugitive Slave Law should meet with uncompromising antagonism and violent expressions of feeling. Only eight

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

days after President Fillmore signed the bill on September 18th, 1850, all of the city papers printed a notice summoning the citizens of Syracuse and vicinity to meet in the City Hall on October 4th "to make an expression of their sense of the act of the present Congress." The notice was signed by twenty men, some of whom had never been identified with the abolition movement. On the appointed day the hall was crowded. Mayor Alfred H. Hovey presided, and eight vice-presidents, chosen from the two political parties, were elected. They were: E. W. Leavenworth, Horace Wheaton, Jason Woodruff, Oliver Teall, Robert Gere, Lyman Kingsley, Hiram Putnam and Dr. Lyman Clary, the only one among them previously known as abolitionists. A series of thirteen resolutions was passed, which called on people everywhere to oppose all attempts to enforce the law, and which provided for a vigilance committee to see that "no person is deprived of his liberty without due process of law." The three most significant resolutions are as follows:

> "Resolved, That the Fugitive Slave Law recently enacted by the Congress of the United States is a most flagrant outrage upon the inalienable rights of man and a daring assault upon the palladium of American liberties."
>
> "Resolved, That every intelligent man and woman throughout our country ought to read attentively and understand the provisions of this law in all its details, so that they may be fully aware of its diabolical spirit and cruel ingenuity, and prepare themselves to oppose all attempts to enforce it."
>
> "Resolved, That we recommend the appointment of a Vigilance Committee of thirteen citizens, whose duty it shall be to see that no person is deprived of his liberty without 'due process of law.' And all good citizens are earnestly requested to aid and sustain them in all needed efforts for the security of every person claiming the protection of our laws."

WHO WERE ON THE VIGILANCE COMMITTEE

The meeting was addressed by the Rev. S. R. Ward, the Rev. R. R. Raymond, Mr. Charles A. Wheaton and the Hon. Charles B. Sedgwick. The following men were appointed as members of the Vigilance Committee: C. A. Wheaton, Dr. Lyman Clary, Vivus W. Smith, C. B. Sedgwick, Hiram Putnam, E. W. Leavenworth, Abner Bates, George Barnes, P. H. Agan, the Rev. J. W. Loguen, John Williams, the Rev. R. R. Raymond and John Thomas. It was agreed that anyone who knew of a person in danger should toll the bell of a meeting house in a particular manner, and that the members of the committee should assemble at a rendezvous. The meeting then adjourned to October 12th.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

The second meeting was even more enthusiastic than the first. By the Syracuse "Star" of Monday, October 14th, 1850, it was called "the most perfect jam ever witnessed in this city." The principal speakers were W. H. Burleigh, C. B. Sedgwick, P. H. Snow and the Rev. R. R. Raymond of Syracuse, and General Nye of Madison. A committee of which the Rev. Samuel J. May was chairman, reported a long series of resolutions, of which the four following are a specimen:

> "Resolved, That we solemnly reiterate our abhorrence of the Fugitive Slave Law, which in effect is nothing less than a license for kidnapping, under the protection and at the expense of our Federal Government, which has become the tool of oppressors."
>
> "Resolved, That now is the day and now the hour to take our stand for liberty and humanity. If we now refuse to assert our independency of the tyrants who aspire to absolute power in our republic, we may hope for nothing better than entire subjugation to their will, and shall leave our children in a condition little better than that of the creatures of absolute despots."
>
> "Resolved, That as all of us are liable at any moment to be summoned to assist in kidnapping such persons as anybody may claim to be his slaves, and to be fined one thousand dollars if we refuse to do the bidding of the land pirates, whom this law would encourage to prowl through our country, it is the dictate of prudence, as well as good fellowship in a righteous cause, that we should unite ourselves in an association, pledged to stand by its members in opposing this law, and to share with any of them the pecuniary losses they may incur under the operation of this law."
>
> "Resolved, That such an association be now formed, so that Southern oppressors may know that the people of Syracuse and its vicinity are prepared to sustain one another in resisting the encroachments of despotism."

KEPT ATTENTION ALIVE TO SITUATION

The Vigilance Committee appointed on October 4th and the association formed on October 12th to co-operate with the committee, and to bear the expenses incurred in resisting the law, kept the attention of the people in Syracuse alive to the subject of evils connected with slavery.

In the spring of 1851 there occurred in Syracuse other events which quickened the interest of the inhabitants and strengthened their determination to resist the execution of the Fugitive Slave Law. The Anti-Slavery Society, when denied a place of meeting in New York City, was invited by the Syracuse abolitionists to hold its

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

GERRIT SMITH

Noted Abolitionist of Peterboro, who had an active interest in all Syracuse anti-slavery movements and was a counsellor all through the Jerry Rescue.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

THE REV. SAMUEL J. MAY

Who advised the rescuers to be sure and get Jerry, but not to hurt anybody.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

convention here. May 7th, 8th and 9th were the dates of meeting. Gerrit Smith and the Rev. Samuel J. May welcomed the delegates. The resolutions adopted were radical and sometimes violent in tone, one of them being as follows: "That as for the Fugitive Slave Law, we execrate it, we spit upon it, we trample it under our feet." During the spring of this year the Liberty Party also held several meetings, attended by members from Syracuse and vicinity.

There were some people in Syracuse who were strongly and conscientiously opposed to abolition and to defiance of the Fugitive Slave Law. They believed that the Constitution protected property rights in slaves, that law should be obeyed by all citizens, even when they disapproved, and that the anti-slavery agitation might disrupt the federation of States. These "Friends of the Union" or "Patriots," as they were called, invited Daniel Webster to deliver an address with the purpose of quieting agitation, recalling rebellious spirits to a sense of their duty as citizens, and impressing them with the determination of the federal authorities to enforce the law. Webster spoke on May 26th, 1851, from the balcony of Frazee Hall, overlooking Market Square before the City Hall, which space is now largely occupied by the southern half of the City Hall. His speech contained the following threatening words, as reported by the Syracuse "Star" on Wednesday, May 28th, 1851: "But what do we hear? We hear of persons assembling in Massachusetts and New York, who set up themselves over the Constitution—above the law—and above the decisions of the highest tribunals—and who say that this law shall not be carried into effect. You have heard it here, have you not? Has it not been so said in the County of Onondaga? (Cries of Yes, Yes). And have they not pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to defeat its execution? Pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor! For what! For the violation of the law—for the committal of treason to the country —for it is treason and nothing else." (Great applause).

DANIEL WEBSTER'S THREAT

"I am a lawyer, and I value my reputation as a lawyer more than anything else—and I tell you if men get together and declare a law of Congress shall not be executed in any case, and assemble in numbers to prevent the execution of such law—they are traitors, and are guilty of treason, and bring upon themselves the penalty of the law. No! No! It is time to put an end to this imposition upon good citizens, good men and good women. It is treason! *treason!* TREASON! and nothing else, (cheers) and if they do not incur the penalties of treason, it is owing to the clemency of the law's administration, and to no merit of their own." * * * "Depend upon it, the law will be executed in its spirit and to its letter. (Great applause). It will be executed in all the great cities—here in Syracuse—in the

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

midst of the next anti-slavery convention, if the occasion shall arise; then we shall see what becomes of their lives and their sacred honor!" (Tremendous cheering).

By a strange coincidence it happened that the possibility mentioned in Webster's speech was realized, but his prediction and threat were not fulfilled. An attempt was made to execute the Fugitive Slave Law "here in Syracuse," and in the "midst of an anti-slavery convention." It failed completely and the "traitors" not only escaped with their "lives and fortunes," but their "sacred honor" to which Mr. Webster made scornful and sarcastic reference, has been given an enduring place in American history.

JERRY IS CAPTURED

Among the negroes living in Syracuse in 1851 was William Henry, so called after his white father, but known here both in popular and official parlance as Jerry. He had escaped from his owner, John McReynolds, of Marion County, Missouri, made his way to Syracuse, probably by the underground railroad, and here decided to remain. He was an intelligent, athletic mulatto, about thirty years of age, with some mechanical ability. He was employed for a time in the cabinet shop of Mr. Charles F. Williston, and then in the cooper shop of F. Mack, in the First Ward. Here he was at work on October 1st, 1851, alone and unsuspecting, when about noon of that day he suddenly found himself seized from behind and held fast. His captors were Deputy Marshals Allen of Syracuse, Swift of Auburn, Bemis of Canandaigua, Fitch of Rochester, and Policeman Lowell of Syracuse. He was handcuffed and told that the charge against him was theft. On this pretext he was taken before United States Commissioner Joseph F. Sabine, whose office was in the Townsend Block, where he learned that he had been arrested under the Fugitive Slave Law.

The city on October first was filled with visitors from the surrounding country, and from more distant towns. The Onondaga County Agricultural Society was holding its fair on the grounds now occupied by the University Buildings, and in the Congregational Church, directly west of the Courier Building on East Genesee Street, a convention of the Liberty Party was in session. To this assembly came Mr. C. A. Wheaton with the exciting news that a fugitive slave had been arrested. The convention quickly adjourned, the members going in a body to the office of Commissioner Sabine. Gerrit Smith arrived early and took his seat near the prisoner's counsel. The Rev. Samuel J. May was also present. Abner Bates, acting in accordance with the plan of the Vigilance Committee, rang the alarm signal on the church bell. Soon all the bells were ringing save that of the Episcopal Church. The story of Jerry's arrest spread with telegraphic speed throughout the city and a great crowd began to gather.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

The preliminary examination of the prisoner was begun about one o'clock by the United States District Attorney, James R. Lawrence, who with Joseph Loomis was the counsel for James Lear, Jerry's claimant, and agent for his owner. Leonard Gibbs of Washington County appeared for Jerry.

THE FIRST ATTEMPT AT RESCUE

By half past two the crowd in the Commissioner's office was so great that an adjournment was taken for one-half hour to find a larger room. The crowd, however, did not withdraw when the adjournment was announced. Suddenly a group of men closed about Jerry, rushed him through the door, which was at once slammed and held fast by one Merrick, a powerful man, and threw Jerry bodily onto the stairs, down which he rolled head over heels to the sidewalk. Here he quickly regained his feet and though hampered by the manacles on his arms, set out at top speed along Water Street toward the Syracuse House. The crowd, which had opened to permit Jerry to pass, closed on Deputy Marshal Allen and the other officers. Soon, however, they were in pursuit, followed by a crowd, some of whom wished to aid in the escape, some in the capture of the fugitive. After passing the Syracuse House Jerry ran east through Hanover Square, then to East Water Street, and onward to the Lock Street bridge over the canal. Here he was overtaken and after a furious struggle, which left him bruised, bleeding and half naked, he was captured by Policemen Peter Way and Russell Lowell. He was thrown onto a dray, one officer sat on his body, another on his legs to keep him down, and thus he was carried to the office of the police justice, Sylvester House, in the Raynor Block, now known as the Jerry Rescue Block. He was here placed in a back room, his legs were shackled and a guard consisting of deputy marshals and several policemen was placed over him. At this time Jerry was in such a fury of rage that the Chief of Police asked the Rev. Mr. May to quiet him. The two were left alone, and after some difficulty he was quieted by Mr. May's assurance that a rescue was being planned.

INFLAMED THE PUBLIC INDIGNATION

The arrest of so peaceable and blameless a man as Jerry, the injustice of the procedure before the Commissioner, where he was not allowed to testify in his own behalf, the bold attempt at escape, the probability of a return to slavery, all inflamed the indignation of the people to the boiling point. Repeated offers of rescue were promptly made to the Rev. Mr. May, who promptly rejected them, because proper arrangements were not yet complete, but the makers were urged to remain near the scene and to help at the right moment

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

and in the right way. The attitude of the crowd was apparently alarming, for Deputy Marshal Allen demanded that the Sheriff call out the militia. Captain Prendergast complied, but Colonel Vandenburgh countermanded the order.

Immediately after the recapture of Jerry steps were taken to effect his rescue. Mr. Thomas G. White invited a few men to meet in the counting room of Abner Bates for the purpose of arranging a plan of action. At this meeting the decision was made to assemble that same evening at early candle light at the office of Dr. Hiram Hoyt, where detailed arrangements for the seizure of Jerry were made. Early in the evening, the date being October first, the following persons accordingly gathered at Dr. Hoyt's office, the doctor himself being present: Doctors James Fuller and R. W. Pease; Gerrit Smith, the Rev. Samuel J. May, Charles A. Wheaton; the colored ministers, S. R. Ward and J. W. Loguen; the Rev. R. R. Raymond, Caleb Davis, Montgomery Merrick, Abner Bates, James Davis, J. M. Clapp, James Baker, Jason S. Hoyt, Edward K. Hunt, George Carter, Peter Hallenbeck, James Parsons, Lemuel Field, William Gray, Samuel Thomas of Cazenovia, L. P. Noble of Fayetteville, Washington Stickney of Canastota. As the meeting was secret and called for illegal purposes, there is no certainty that this list is complete. During the discussion Gerrit Smith made the following significant remarks, which perhaps explain why the attack on the police offices was undertaken: "It is not unlikely the Commissioner (Sabine) will release Jerry if the examination is suffered to proceed—but the moral effect of such an acquittal will be as nothing to a bold and forcible rescue. A forcible rescue will demonstrate the strength of public opinion against the possible legality of slavery, and this Fugitive Slave Law in particular. It will honor Syracuse and be a powerful example everywhere."

PLAN OF ACTION ADOPTED

The plan of action finally adopted is best stated in the following words of the Rev. Samuel J. May, who had a leading part in all this drama: "It was agreed that a skillful and bold driver in a strong buggy, with the fleetest horse to be got in the city, should be stationed not far off to receive Jerry when he should be brought out. Then to drive hither and thither about the city until he saw no one pursuing him; not to attempt to get out of town, because it was reported that every exit was well guarded, but to return to a certain point near the center of the city, where he would find two men waiting to receive his charge. With them he was to leave Jerry and know nothing about the place of his retreat.

"At a given signal the doors and windows of the police office were to be demolished at once, and the rescuers rush in and fill the room,

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

press around and upon the officers, overwhelming them by their numbers, not by blows, and so soon as they were confined and powerless by the pressure of bodies about them, several men were to take up Jerry and to bear him to the buggy aforesaid. Strict injunctions were given and it was agreed not intentionally to injure the policemen. Gerrit Smith and several others pressed this caution very urgently upon those who were gathered in Dr. Hoyt's office. And the last thing I said as we were coming away was, 'If anyone is injured in this fray, I hope it may be one of our own party.' "—"Recollections of the Anti-Slavery Conflict," Samuel J. May; p. 377.

Meanwhile a great crowd in a ferment of excitement had gathered during the late afternoon and early evening in Clinton Square before the Raynor Block. The examination of Jerry before Commissioner Sabine had been resumed about 5:30. Hervey Sheldon and D. D. Hillis aided Mr. Gibbs in defending the alleged slave; J. R. Anderson appeared, along with Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Loomis, in behalf of the claimant, Lear. The crowd grew more restive and shouted repeatedly "Bring him out, give him up." Samuel R. Ward and C. C. Foote of Michigan addressed the people, and though they did not urge resistance to the law, there was little in their words to soothe agitated feelings. The excitement steadily increased and soon stones were rattling against the building. A large one hurled through the north window of the police office narrowly missed the head of Commissioner Sabine, and he forthwith adjourned the hearing until the next day. At the same time Jerry was taken to a small room directly back of the police office, where he was well guarded by deputy marshals and policemen.

RESCUERS ARMED WITH CLUBS AND AXES

By this time, at about 8:00 P. M., the rescuers were leaving Dr. Hoyt's office and mingling with the crowd. They were armed with clubs, axes and rods of iron. At about 8:30 P. M. there came from Salina Street a file of men carrying on boards between them a long and heavy beam. It was the battering ram. And now the attack began in earnest. The windows were smashed, the casings chopped and pried out, bricks even torn from their places, and the outside door ripped from its fastenings with the heavy ram. As the rescuers poured in through door and windows, Ira Cobb and L. D. Mansfield, who had remained with Jerry, turned off the gas. Something had been accomplished, but between Jerry and his friends there remained a stout partition. The plan was that this should be broken down, in order that the invaders might not be shot down as they entered the door. A fierce attack with axes and the battering ram was at once begun. At this point Marshal Fitch of Rochester partly opened the door, thrust out his arm, and fired twice, slightly wound-

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

ing one man. As the partition was loosened, he jumped from the north window and was found to have a broken arm. Whether the injury was caused by a blow delivered by one of the assailants at the time he fired, or by his fall upon the stone coping of the canal is not certain. Deputy Marshal Allen also fled. As the rescuers, with James Davis, J. M. Clapp and Peter Hallenbeck at their head, continued to batter at the partition, Sheriff Samuel Smith of Ralls County, Missouri, who had accompanied Lear to Syracuse, pushed Jerry before him to the door, crying out, "Get out of this, you damned nigger, you are making all this muss," and quickly slipped by him into the crowd. All resistance was now over. Jerry was picked up with his manacles and shackles on and carried along West Water Street eastward to the Syracuse House, where the pro-slavery men and politicians had gathered. From there he was carried past the old New York Central Station down Warren Street as far as Brintnall's Hotel, where he was placed in a light buggy and driven rapidly away. In accordance with the plan formed at Dr. Hoyt's office, no attempt was made to take him from the city that night. The driver eluded all pursuers, if there were any, and at about nine o'clock delivered Jerry to Mr. Jason S. Hoyt and Mr. James Davis. The three walked a short distance to the home of Mr. Caleb Davis, who was a pro-slavery Democrat, but for humanity's sake consented to give Jerry shelter. His house stood on the east side of Orange Street, just off Genesee, and about on the site of the Medical College. Jerry's irons were here cut off and a doctor was called to relieve the feverish condition resulting from the excitement and exertion of the day. Here Jerry remained for four days, until the evening of Sunday, October fifth. During this period only four or five people knew where he was, citizens generally believing he had gone directly to Canada.

HOW JERRY LEFT HIDING PLACE

How Jerry left his hiding place is thus told by the Rev. Samuel J. May: "But the next Sunday evening, just after dark, a covered wagon with a span of very fleet horses was seen standing for a few minutes near the door of Mr. Caleb Davis' house. Mr. Jason S. Hoyt and Mr. James Davis were seen to help a somewhat infirm old man into the vehicle, jump in themselves and start off at a rapid rate. Suspicion was awakened and several of the 'patriots' of our city set off in pursuit of the 'traitors'. The chase was a hot one for eight or ten miles, but Jerry's deliverers had the advantage on the start and in the speed of the horses that were bearing him to liberty."—"Recollections of the Anti-Slavery Conflict," Samuel J. May. P. 378.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

The success of the flight from Syracuse was due in no small degree to Mr. James Davis, who appears to have enlisted the aid of a toll-gate keeper on the Cicero road. When the wagon containing Jerry reached the gate it was quickly opened, but when the pursuers arrived, the gate-keeper appeared to be sunk in his final slumber, so slow was he to respond to their call. At Brewerton James and Caleb Davis turned back, while Mr. Jason S. Hoyt went on with Jerry. That night they went as far as Mexico, where Jerry remained for several days at the home of Mr. Orson Ames. Thence he was taken to the home of a Mr. Clarke, near Oswego. As American captains might betray the fugitive, and as British craft were carefully watched, it was difficult to find passage to Canada. Not until a week had elapsed did Mr. Clarke find a British skipper to whom Jerry could be safely entrusted. From a deserted point on the lake shore he was rowed out in a small boat to the waiting schooner, which carried him to Kingston, Ontario. Here he was sent to the home of Joseph George, a friend of slaves, and soon was at work as a chair maker or cooper. He married and lived an industrious, respectable life for the few years left him. On October 8th, 1853, he died of tuberculosis.

INCREASED OPPOSITION TO FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

The rescue of Jerry caused great satisfaction in Syracuse, and the opposition to the Fugitive Slave Law was even more intense than before. But the rescuers had broken the law and the government of the United States undertook to punish them. In anticipation of arrest, Peter Hallenbeck and his family, and the Rev. J. W. Loguen fled to Canada. The Rev. Mr. Loguen returned the next spring and again took up the work of aiding fugitive slaves to escape to Canada. He was a highly respected citizen of Syracuse and later was made a bishop. Other participants in the rescue were soon arrested and their friends, with other opponents of slavery, met in the Congregational Church to decide what course should be pursued. The decision was that the law should be obeyed, that no resistance should be offered to the United States authorities. The probability that no jury would convict was perhaps a factor which aided in reaching this decision. By October 15th eight men had been arrested. They were Ira H. Cobb, Moses Summers, W. S. Salmon, James Davis, Stephen Porter, Harrison Allen, William Thompson and Prince Jackson, the last three being negroes. These men were taken to Auburn, where they were indicted. They were accompanid by nearly one hundred Syracusans, among them several ladies. As soon as the indictment was completed, William H. Seward stepped forward and was the first to affix his signature to the bail

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

bond. Among others who signed bonds were Alfred Cobb, George Barnes, Hiram Putnam, Samuel J. May, William E. Abbott, R. R. Raymond, Seth Haight, Abner Bates, Charles B. Sedgwick and C. A. Wheaton.

On October 15th a mass meeting of citizens of Onondaga County was held at the City Hall for the purpose of considering whether the rescue should be condemned or approved. The assembly passed unanimously a series of resolutions, which justified and applauded the rescue. Ten days later a similar meeting was held by those who disproved the rescue. They were unable to agree, but the majority passed resolutions denouncing the act.

On November 5th five other participants in the rescue were also indicted in the United States District Court at Buffalo. They were Enoch Reed (colored), William L. Crandall, L. H. Salisbury, J. B. Brigham, Montgomery Merrick. This brought the total number of those indicted up to thirteen.

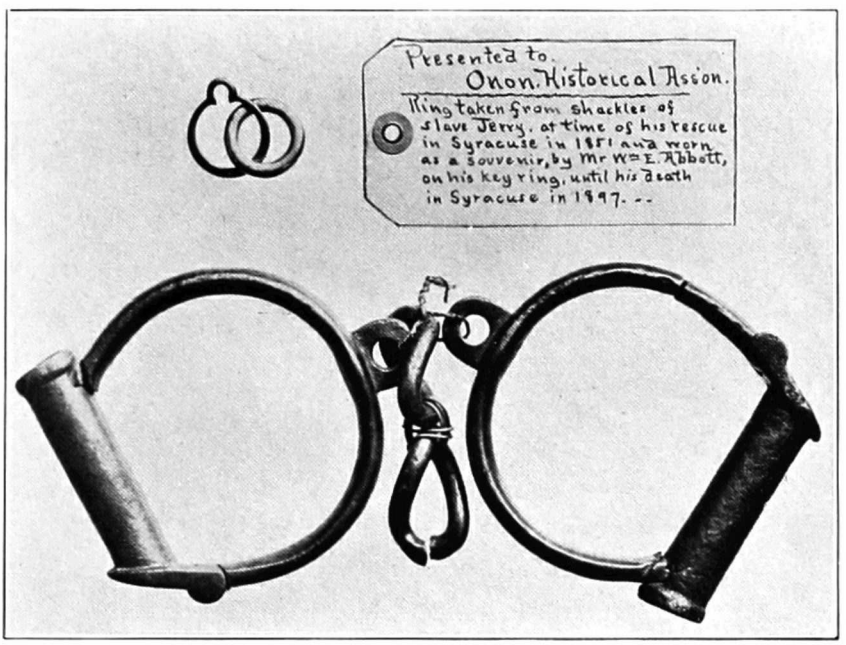
TRIALS OF THE INDICTED MEN

The trials began in January, 1852, at Albany. For the accused appeared Charles B. Sedgwick, John G. Forbes, D. D. Hillis, Gerrit Smith, LeRoy Morgan and Judge J. W. Nye of Madison. Before the cases had been argued they were postponed to June, then to October, then to January, 1853. During this month the first case was tried at Canandaigua before Judge W. K. Hall, and Enoch Reed was found guilty. He appealed, but died before the appeal was heard. W. S. Salmon was tried and acquitted, and the jury disagreed in the cases of Ira H. Cobb and J. B. Brigham. The remaining cases were once postponed, once adjourned, and then dropped. By this time it was in all probability impossible to find a jury which had not formed a positive opinion concerning the merits of the case.

The law, however, was not felt by the friends of Jerry alone. James Lear, the agent of Jerry's owner, Mr. McReynolds of Missouri, and Deputy Marshal Allen were arrested on the charge of kidnapping a citizen of Syracuse. Mr. Allen was indicted by the Grand Jury of Onondaga County, was tried in June, 1852, but acquitted on the ground that in arresting Jerry he was executing a law of the United States.

For several years, while feeling in regard to the slavery questions was yet intense, October 1st was celebrated as the anniversary of the greatest event in the history of Syracuse. The first celebration was held in the new roundhouse of the New York Central Railroad, which was offered for this purpose by John Wilkinson, the president

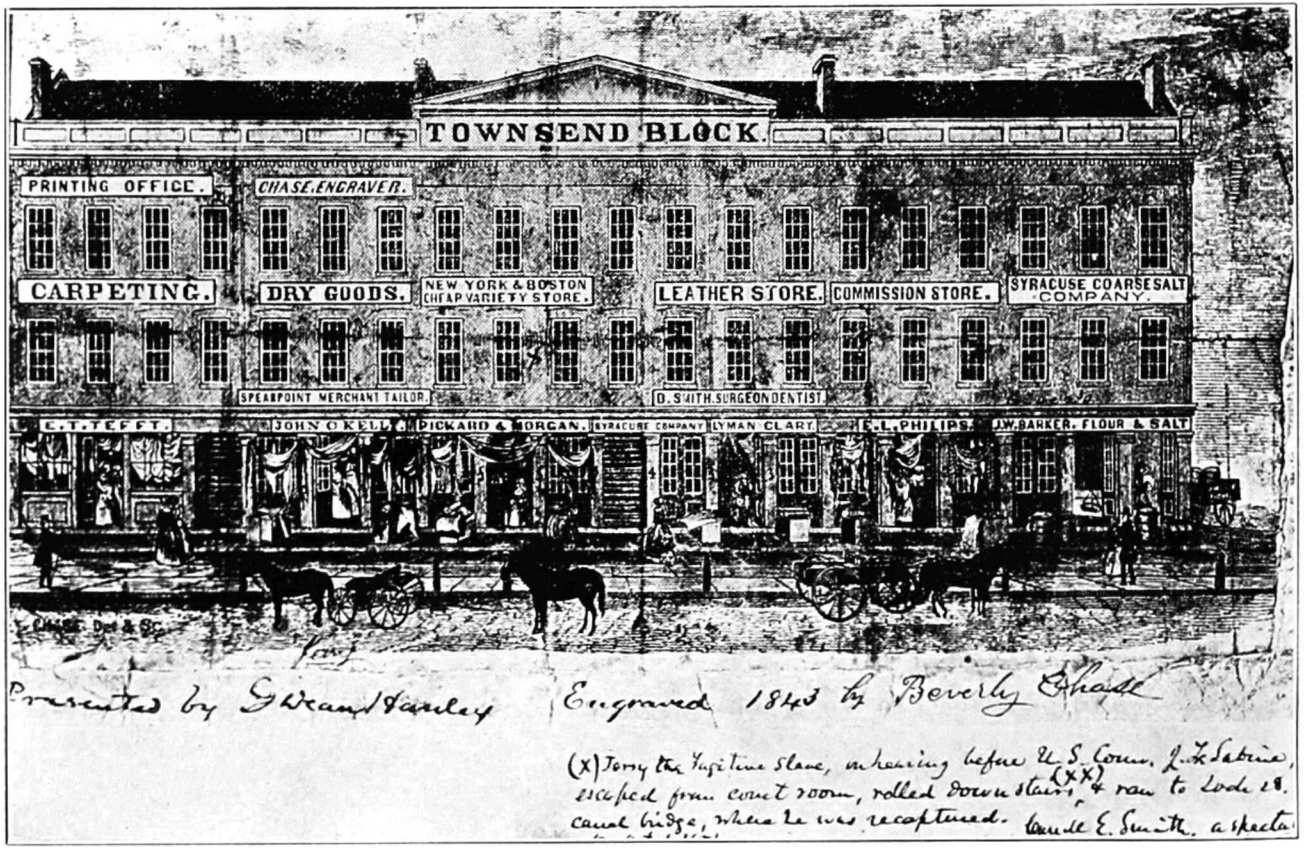
THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM


Presented to.
Onon. Historical Assoc.
Ring taken from shackles of
slave Jerry, at time of his rescue
in Syracuse in 1851 and worn
as a souvenir, by Mr Wm E. Abbott,
on his key ring, until his death
in Syracuse in 1897. --

PART OF JERRY SHACKLES

Worn by the fugitive slave when rescued; filed off with great difficulty that night; now in museum of the Onondaga Historical Association.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM


TOWNSEND BLOCK.
PRINTING OFFICE.
CHASE, ENGRAVER.
CARPETING.
DRY GOODS.
NEW YORK & BOSTON CHEAP VARIETY STORE.
LEATHER STORE.
COMMISSION STORE.
SYRACUSE COARSE SALT COMPANY.
SPEARPOINT MERCHANT TAILOR.
D. SMITH, SURGEON DENTIST.
C. T. TEFFT.
JOHN O'KELLY.
PICKARD & MORGAN.
SYRACUSE COMPANY.
LYMAN CLARK.
E. L. PHILIPS.
J. W. BARKER, FLOUR & SALT
Presented by D. Beard Hanley
Engraved 1848 by Beverly Chase
(X) Jerry the Fugitive slave, on hearing before U. S. Comm. Jas. Sabine, escaped from court room, rolled down stairs, (XX) & ran to Lock 18. canal bridge, where he was recaptured. Wm. E. Smith, a spectator

WHERE FIRST HEARING IN JERRY CASE TOOK PLACE

Building upon south side of Clinton Square at corner of Water and Clinton Streets. Upon second floor was new office of U. S. Commissioner Sabine; it was his first case; when Jerry got away in the afternoon session, office was completely wrecked; Abolitionists offered to pay damages, but Sabine said to never mind, as he had already resigned.

of the road, because no other building was large enough. One resident of Syracuse who was present at that meeting is yet alive, Mrs. C. D. B. Mills. Gerrit Smith presided, William Lloyd Garrison, Lucretia Mott and others spoke, and letters were read from Charles Sumner, the Rev. Theodore Parker and other opponents of slavery. As time passed, however, these memorial meetings were discontinued.

Knowledge of the brave men, who on that faraway night of October, 1851, faced the pistols of the Federal officers might pass from among later generations of their townsmen. That their names should not fade wholly into oblivion, one of their contemporaries, a man of like spirit with them, Dr. Alfred Mercer, learned, high-minded, enthusiastic for freedom and the right in all their forms, makes provision in his will in these terms of simple eloquence, "To keep green in memory the heroism of the men who rescued Jerry—men who could not look on a slave."

FORMER MAYOR C. F. WILLISTON'S RECOLLECTIONS

(Published in the Syracuse Sunday Times)

It was in the winter of 1849-50. The old line Whigs had possession of the national government and Millard Fillmore was president (accidental), when one evening came into my cabinet warerooms as finely moulded specimen of humanity as one liked to see. He was about thirty years old, bright, strong and healthy, and wanted employment at wood turning, sawing or any job by which he could earn a livelihood. I was in need of such help and was attracted towards him by his manner and his intelligent answers to my queries. It was Jerry, the afterward famous hero of the "rescue."

He gave me a history of his life, which after events proved was truthful. He was the confidential servant (slave) of a Missouri senator, born on his master's plantation, and, for a slave, had been carefully educated and for years had sole charge of his master's interests, so far as plantation matters were concerned. He bought and sold produce, etc., kept the accounts, and was the right-hand man of the estate.

If there is any truth in the laws of heredity his mother (a bright mulatto) must have been a superior woman. She was a fixture from childhood upon that plantation.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

Jerry took French leave of the plantation one day and, after various escapades, arrived in Syracuse. We had then in the various branches of the business about forty-five workmen. I set him at work upon a turning lathe. At the end of the week I was notified by a committee of the employees that the "nigger" must quit, or that the rest of the workmen would leave. I inquired into the reasons and found that the "color" was the trouble.

My corps of workmen represented various shades of European nationalities, the Teutonic element predominant. I stated to the committee that they might report back that those who desired to leave could come in the office on Monday and settle accounts, and I would try to run my own business, with the help of the "nigger." The result, in brief, was that no one left and in a short time Jerry was a favorite with all. He remained for a year or more and left to engage in the coopering business, which afforded him better wages. He worked at this business (with the exception of a month in the employ of the county), until his arrest under the Fugitive Slave Law, in September, 1851.

I should say here that no ordinary politician kept himself better posted on current legislation, news and affairs generally than Jerry. His favorite paper to read was the New York Evening Post, which I had daily, mainly for his reading. He was at home in history, geography, and, sadly enough, in the Slave Code and legislation.

Syracuse and the County of Onondaga in those days had the reputation of not being very sound on the slavery question. Although the political majority in both city and county was Democratic, it was of the radical (or Silas Wright) stripe.

(At this point Mr. Williston repeated the current story with few changes of the visit of Webster, his speech, the arrest of Jerry and the rescue.)

There were many amusing incidents connected with this "rescue" which never got into print. Many of the prominent actors have gone to the Silent Land. If recognition is possible, Jerry will be there to greet them, for he had a great, sympathetic heart and a disposition overflowing with human kindness.

His past is secure. He will live all along down the line of future ages, upon the historic pages of the national annals as contemporary with Webster, Fillmore, Cushing and others, who were actors on the stage of politics. And when, in his turn, Bob Toombs of Georgia, as once he promised, shall make the roll-call of his slaves, at the base of the monument on Bunker Hill, I doubt not but Jerry will be there.

C. F. WILLISTON.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

MERRICK REMINISCENCES

(Written by Charles Merrick, November 17, 1893.)

The Fugitive Slave Law provided a penalty of $1,000 fine and six months' imprisonment for any person aiding or abetting an escaping slave. At about this period Luther Lee was the preacher of the First Wesleyan Methodist Church of Syracuse. One year I recorded the number of fugitive slaves that came under my personal observation from the first of January to the first of May, and there were sent by letter, via the "underground railroad," during that time, forty-three or forty-four of the unfortunates to Luther Lee, from Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love.

Horace White was then the president of the railroad, and he humanely provided me with free passes for the fugitives on the road to Canada and freedom. Dollars, the indispensable "sinews of war" in all cases, were required, and I collected from three to five dollars apiece from those locally interested in the glorious cause, in order that those fleeing from oppression might not arrive wholly destitute in a foreign land.

In due course of time came the world-famed "Jerry Rescue." Then, indeed, were principles "time-tried and fire-tested." The battle was on. There was no place on the line for the wavering, the doubtful or the uncertain. History informs us that on great occasions involving the life of a nation or a never-dying principle, the required aid appears, as if Heaven-directed.

At this time I was living at the corner of East Railroad and Grape Streets, and when on my way home to dinner one day I met Charles Pope, an alderman. He hailed me, I stopped, and he said, quietly but with evident nervousness, "They have arrested a fugitive slave, but don't you tell anybody that I told you." He was in fear of the popular public sentiment. I did not take much time for dinner, and was soon on the Clinton street bridge ready for action. Soon afterward we met at the office of Dr. Hiram Hoyt and there passed around in single file, clasping hands with the doctor and pledging ourselves to be true.

Gerrit Smith was there and, of course, said all that was necessary. With eloquent voice and commanding emphasis he exclaimed, "We desire his release!" Three times he repeated this virtual demand couched in the language, but not the tone, of a desire. His declaration had the effect intended. I left the room to get the "boys" ready for action. There was naturally more or less excitement, but a general steadfastness of purpose was gloriously manifest. I warned the more excitable ones to be careful to inflict no injury upon any one.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

This was after Jerry's examination before United States Commissioner Sabine of Onondaga Hollow. It was in the second story of the Townsend Block and the room was crowded with excited partisans and deeply interested spectators. A large man, the focus of all eyes, the claimant of liberty-loving Jerry, was seated in a chair. He assumed a great importance. We had secured a lawyer who was thoroughly versed in his profession, and I sincerely regret that I cannot recall his name. He asked the burly claimant his name and was answered thus: "I represent an ancient people. My name is Lear." Upon giving this reply he cast a bar-room glance about him as if seeking approval. He sat there with pistol in side pocket and the lawyer who appeared for us demanded that he be disarmed before being sworn. The lawyer remarked quietly, "I have learned that it is not all of life to live, nor all of death to die." Yes, it was a serious time, and the slightest expression or act might lead to an explosion, the echoes of which would ring down the corridors of time. So it was to be!

The Commissioner took sides with the slaveholder. All was still for a moment or two. Suddenly a man by the name of Salmon, from Oswego County, a tanner and currier by vocation, a full-grown man of powerful voice, cried out: "Gentlemen, you see how it is going; there is no use of longer waiting!"

Then began a great stamping and cheering, Jerry sitting quietly meanwhile, with chains encircling legs and wrists. Gerrit Smith, the irrepressible, sat at the left side of Jerry as counsel, and I stood at his right. Presently a man named Sereno F. King stepped quickly in front of the fugitive and said, "Let's take him out." Jerry turned his face up to mine, rolled his piteous eyes, and meekly asked, "Shall I try it?" I gave him a wink. He made a spring from his chair and jumped for the door. Then came a rousing rough-and-tumble, a general clinch, grab, push and haul. But Jerry got out of the door, which my father, who stood handily by, slammed shut as he passed through. This detained the officers until Jerry had cast himself headlong down the stairs. Upon reaching the street he ran about a quarter of a mile before being overtaken. He was then placed upon a horse cart, in a lying posture, with men astride of him, and returned to the Jerry Rescue Building on Clinton Street, with the clothes half torn from his body. This was an advertiser. Next, the people, quivering with outward or suppressed excitement, began to arrive from every direction.

Samuel R. Ward, the colored preacher and orator, was present at the Rescue Building and stood upon the steps. He delivered a rousing, heart-stirring speech on the Declaration of Independence, and, as it was dusk, those who were not familiar with his voice

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

could not believe that one of the oppressed race was the eloquent orator.

At this juncture Jerry was secured in a back room, and yet the officers in charge were in fear of what would come—fear and trembling on the one hand and an aroused and righteous indignation on the other. The would-be rescuers secured a plank twelve or fourteen feet long to be used as a battering ram. A stalwart young colored man named Randall came up with an iron bar and took position in front of the sash door. I warned him to be careful and hurt no one. With a few well-directed, powerful blows he smashed that door from top to bottom. Then men rushed forward to use the plank as a battering ram against the partition. If we are correctly informed, the ram's horn has proved powerful on notable occasions. After a few onslaughts of this plank ram the officers submitted. Jerry was delivered to his rescuers!

PISTOLS COULD NOT INTERFERE

During these exciting scenes a United States marshal from Rochester stood, pistol in hand, with outstretched arm. A quiet appearing man standing by thought that arm ought to be broken. And it was broken. The lights were turned out. The marshal jumped from the window to the berm bank of the canal. It was but three or four feet wide. He was soon surrounded and kindly conducted to the office of a surgeon—to Dr. Hoyt, the very man with whom the rescuers had clasped hands and pledged their honor to be true. The doctor, in a kind of bitter-sweet voice, informed some of us that the brave officer had cried like a child and had stated that his wife had beseeched him not to go out upon such business.

To his honor be it said, there was one United States marshal that would not serve in such a cause. His name was Lewis T. Hawley. He asserted that he would as soon be caught in a hen-roost stealing fowls as in an effort to arrest a fugitive slave.

The next morning the bell of the old Congregational Church rang a call at 9 o'clock for the people to gather, and there came the very best-natured and happy lot of people that ever I saw assembled. The house was filled to overflowing. Dr. Hoyt came in and told his experience with the marshal of the broken arm. The good doctor's eyes twinkled and he told the story of reducing the fracture in a half-humorous, mock pathetic manner that caused much laughter and enthusiasm. He said: "I gave the arm an extra good wring for the cause, and then I put my hand down deep in his pocket and wrung that. He paid for it."

Soon after these exciting and memorable occurrences, William L. Chaplin was arrested on the charge of helping an escaping slave,

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

and was sentenced to prison. Mr. Chaplin was a live man, known of all live men in the cause of humanity. His bail was fixed at $25,000 and the enslavers of men gleefully thought they had him behind the bars for a lifetime. But he was bailed, Gerrit Smith going on the bond for $15,000, and the rest being furnished by the "common people."

Upon his deliverance Mr. Chaplin came direct to Syracuse. We met to welcome him in the old Congregational Church. He there delivered an address that stirred his hearers' souls to their depths. As an orator, Roscoe Conkling reminded me much of him—eloquent, impassioned, forcible and effective. One passage of his speech is impressed upon my memory for all time. He was speaking of the position of the ministry, and in ringing tones asked: "These men that shut themselves up six days out of the seven and then come out to teach the people—what do they know about the rough and tumble of life?"

While he was in prison I named my son Chaplin after him. He said he thought I had done as much as anyone in naming a son for him, and so went home with me to see the boy. I believe there is a good deal in a name at particular times—when you would do as the psalmist did, "run through a troop and jump over a wall."

In this connection proper credit should be given to some of the men who stood at "the head of navigation" on the underground railroad. It took hooks and spears of different turns to catch all kinds of fish. Some of the men stood on the mountain top. There were Peter Burns, who was our speaker; Charles A. Wheaton and George W. Clarke, singers for liberty; while the backers were such men as Ira H. Cobb, Abner Bates, William E. Abbott, Grandison Wilcox, the Rev. J. W. Loguen, the general agent, and others who dared to be true that freedom might prevail throughout the land.

(Given by Charles Merrick, June 1, 1894.)

In the ante-bellum days it was Horace White, then president of the railroad, who assisted many oppressed slaves to the border. One day I called on Mr. White with a sandy-haired, blue-eyed slave, and asked him for the usual pass over his road. This he gave and remarked: "Be careful, Merrick, or you and I will get into trouble over this matter. You know there is a heavy penalty against assisting runaway slaves." "Very well," I replied, "we cannot die in a better cause." Well, he died, and I had a dream which one day I related to Andrew White. I dreamed that I saw Horace in Heaven and said to him: "Horace, which of your deeds makes you feel the best?" He replied that the memory of what he had done for the

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

slaves was his happiest thought. The preacher who officiated at his funeral said (for the church was on the slave-holders' side in those days) that he was glad to say that Mr. White had not been connected with the escape of the slaves. If he had known as much as I know about Horace he would not have said many things that he did. When I told Andrew White the dream he shook hands with me, saying that he was in school at the time and did not know what position his father had taken on the slave question, and seemed much pleased with the information. In one year I remembered sending forty-three or forty-four slaves to Horace White for passes to Canada. I recall a speech made in the hall which stood upon the site of the McCarthy store (northeast corner of Fayette and Salina Streets) by Samuel S. Foster, who had been released from a New England jail, where he had been incarcerated because at a prayer meeting he had risen to say a few words in favor of the slaves.

THE HOLMES STORY

(Written by Samuel N. Holmes, an Eye Witness, June 9, 1894.)

In 1849 the Abolition Party gained national significance by the nomination and support of James G. Birney of Michigan for President of the United States, at the presidential election in 1848. General Zachary Taylor of Louisiana, and Millard Fillmore, of New York, were elected as Whigs, President and Vice-President respectively. On the 4th of March, 1849, they were duly inaugurated as such and entered upon their respective duties, and so continued until the 9th day of July 1850, when President Taylor died and Millard Fillmore succeeded him as President. Since 1844 the Abolition sentiment of the North had continued to grow and increase, and Abolition conventions were being held from year to year, on the first day of October in Syracuse, then known as the hotbed of abolitionism of the country. At these conventions as leaders were Gerrit Smith, Frederick Douglass, Bishop Loguen, the Rev. Samuel J. May, Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison and others, who made bold to declare their sentiments against and for the destruction of slavery. On the 18th of September, 1850, for the further protection and maintenance of slavery in the South, the Fugitive Slave Law was passed by Congress and approved by President Fillmore, making it a crime for any person to assist any slaves to escape from bondage, or to refuse to assist in their recapture and return to their owners.

On May 21, 1851, by an arranged plan to further checkmate the growing anti-slavery sentiment of the North and in support of

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

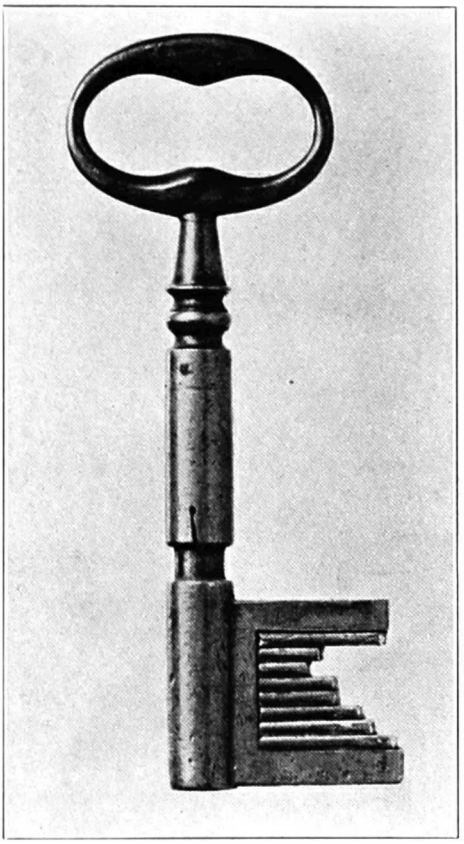
the Fugitive Slave Law, President Fillmore and John J. Crittenden, United States Attorney General, and John A. Graham, Secretary of the Navy, came to Syracuse and were given a public dinner at the Syracuse House. After dinner speeches were made and, with special reference to the Fugitive Slave Law, and one remark made by Mr. Graham we distinctly remember, wherein he said: "If you people of the North do not like the laws of the United States, you can go to Canada or some other country that suits you better."

On the 26th of May next, Daniel Webster came to Syracuse and gave a public address for the Union and the Fugitive Slave Law. It was delivered from an iron balcony of the second story on the east side of the Courier Building, to the thousands gathered before him in the City Hall Park. He spoke with emphasis of the return of fugitive slaves, near the close of his address, and said in his own words: "The Fugitive Slave Law will be executed, even in Syracuse, at the next Abolition convention if need be."

Time went on and the United States officers, having learned that a middle-aged colored man named Jerry, in the First Ward of the city, was a runaway slave, all secret preparations were made by them for his arrest and return as such slave on the first day of October next in fulfillment of Webster's prophecy. A Mr. Henry of Missouri, the owner of Jerry, was already here, and had sworn out a warrant for the arrest of Jerry as a runaway slave, before Joseph F. Sabine, Esq., of this city, United States Commissioner, and placed it in the hands of the United States officers to serve. The Abolition convention was in session in the Congregational Church, where now is Convention Hall. In the afternoon the officers arrested and handcuffed Jerry and brought him before Mr. Sabine at his office in the Townsend Block. The proceedings were conducted by Hon. James R. Lawrence, U. S. District Attorney, of this city.

In the meantime the fact of the arrest of Jerry was told in the convention, and soon the news spread over the city like wildfire, and the church bells all over the city were rung, telling of the arrest. The trial and examination proceeded. Mr. Henry was sworn to his ownership of Jerry and his escape, and with other proofs given the evidence was nearly closed, when Jerry made a bold push to escape and ran down stairs and crossed the Erie canal towards the salt blocks, but after a long chase by the United States officers and others, he was retaken, his handcuffs still on, and loaded onto a drayman's cart like a hog, was brought back with his clothes torn, and bruised and bleeding, this time to the police office, nearby, on the west side of Clinton Street, adjoining the Erie canal, as a more eligible place, and the case held open until 7 o'clock in the evening, to close the matter up. Being present, we saw the officers rub salt

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM



KEY TO JERRY'S CELL

In 1851 what is now known as the Jerry Rescue Building was called The Journal Building, and the Police Office was in it, at No. 2 Clinton Street. There Jerry was taken after his recapture.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

THE REV. J. W. LOGUEN

Who was present at the secret meeting to arrange for the Jerry Rescue and active in the "underground railroad" affair.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

and water on Jerry's raw and bleeding wounds, when, with terrible groans, Jerry said: "Oh, gentlemen, take off these handcuffs and I will take care of myself."

Night and darkness came on and a crowd of excited people gathered on the platform and steps in front of the office, and in the streets, when Sylvester House, the Police Justice, lit the gas in the office and went out in front and put up the window shutters. The crowd outside and noise continued to increase and for further security Jerry was taken into the rear room of the office fronting on the Erie canal. Soon the great noise of an approaching throng was heard, when the gas in the office was turned off, and then the mob outside, with long heavy wooden sleeper joists, used as battering rams endways against the whole front of the office, breaking it all down and into kindling wood with the first stroke; the partition was next demolished and Jerry was seized as pistol shots were fired, and borne out doors and down South Salina Street, shackles and all, on his way to Canada for freedom and liberty.

PARRISH B. JOHNSON'S RECOLLECTIONS

(Published in the Walla-Walla Gazette, November, 1895.)

In order to realize the tameness of "free silver" and "free trade" discussions of today, a man should be old enough to remember the "free men" debates, which culminated in the most gigantic civil war of all human history. He should be able to recall the days when the North was dismayed and the South exulted as Daniel Webster, "the great expounder of the constitution," supported the Fugitive Slave Act, a law that commanded every man in the North to leave his usual employment and help any man from the South who declared another man had left "his owner," and, following the North Star, traveled over the "underground railway" towards manhood; a law that forbade "the escaped" testifying in his own behalf; a law that imposed the heaviest penalties on all who aided a slave to escape from his master or obstructed the officers while taking a "nigger" back to the deep damnation of African slavery. He must be able to recall the feelings which filled his bosom as he learned that that august body, the Supreme Court of the United States, had solemnly declared "a negro has no rights a white man is bound to respect."

When a boy of thirteen the writer witnessed an attempt to execute the Fugitive Slave Law that made so profound an impression upon his mind that the scenes and incidents which fell under his observation forty-four years ago are today among the most clear and vivid pictures in his mind's eye.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

In those days Syracuse was the "Convention City" of the State of New York. In that beautiful city the writer has watched the proceedings of all sorts of conventions: Whig, Soft Shell and Hard Shell Democrats, Know Nothings, Temperance, Liquor Dealers, Women's Rights, Abolition, Republican. These conventions were attended by party leaders and distinguished men from all parts of the State and nation; men noted as orators, as statesmen, as politicians, as philanthropists, as reformers, as journalists. It was a great school for the youth who desired to keep posted on the affairs of the State and nation.

Syracuse was also one of the great stations on the celebrated "underground railroad." It was the home of the Rev. Samuel J. May, one of the best men that ever trod the earth, from whose door no man ever turned with malice in his heart. It was also the home of the Rev. J. W. Loguen, a black man of vast proportions, who was an escaped slave. These men were aided in their efforts to assist the fleeing black man to get to Canada by hundreds of the citizens. In short, Syracuse was a noted "Abolition Hole."

During the summer of 1851 Daniel Webster, who was "swinging around the circle" seeking the Whig nomination for the Presidency, visited Syracuse. In the afternoon he spoke from a small balcony at a second story window to a great crowd of people assembled on the Hay Market. I remember as he spoke he steadied himself by holding on with both hands to the iron railing on the balcony, that his large body was clad in a blue swallow-tailed coat with brass buttons; that a vast head with a dark, impressive face, deep, cavernous eyes, which occasionally flashed like the embers of a smouldering fire, was presented to the people, who gazed with awe and listened with bated breath, when he told why he had made his famous speech of March 7th, 1850, until, in his deepest tones and most measured accents, he said: "The Fugitive Slave Law will be enforced in your city during the next session of the Abolition convention," when a loud murmur of dissent went up from the assembled thousands.

It so happened that the Onondaga County Fair was held during the last week of September and the first week of October, 1851, and it attracted large crowds to Syracuse from the surrounding country. Whether by design or accident it matters not, but the Abolition convention was appointed to assemble at Syracuse during "fair week." While this convention, which was as usual presided over by the venerable Gerrit Smith and attended by William Lloyd Garrison, Fred Douglass, the Rev. Samuel J. May, Abbey Kelly Foster and many lesser Abolitionists, was in session on the first day of October, 1851, word was brought to it that the United States marshal had arrested a negro named Jerry, as an escaped slave from Missouri.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

Instantly the convention was greatly excited. A committee was appointed to investigate the rumor. It hardly more than reached the street before it returned with the information that the examination of Jerry was being held before the United States Commissioner. A committee was appointed to attend the examination. Another sought legal advice, and the leaders earnestly consulted. Someone started the church bells to ringing, the fire alarm, and the streets were speedily filled with excited people. Many ways of preventing Jerry being taken back to slavery were suggested, force being the only sure method proposed. Towards sundown, the examination not having been concluded, the Commissioner adjourned the hearing until evening and appointed the police court room as the place, because his own office was too small to hold the people who wished to hear the proceedings.

In 1851 the Syracuse Police Court held its sessions in a large room which fronted on Clinton Square. This square is in the heart of the city and is some four or five hundred feet wide by as many long. In this square, near the middle, is what was then called "the Packet Basin" of the Erie canal, a broadening of the canal forming the landing where the packet boats, drawn by three fast horses, used on that highway of travel before the advent of travel on the railroads, took on and put off passengers. The canal is spanned by a bridge at Salina Street on the east of the square and one at Clinton Street on the west. These bridges were approached by inclined roadways and were so high that the bridge flooring was about on a level of the second story window. The police court room was on the west side of Clinton Square, and the heel path side of the canal, in the second story of a four-story brick block, and was entered through two pairs of double doors across a broad platform extending from the inclined street leading to the bridge.

Long before the hour for resuming the examination the people began to assemble in Clinton Square from all parts of the city, while the fair grounds poured in large numbers of countrymen. Before it was time to open the doors, many thousands of people had assembled who silently watched the gas lights shine through the dirty windows of the court room.

Boylike, the writer was early on the ground and secured a position against the jamb of the right hand pair of doors. While he was standing there gazing at the vast assemblage and trying to understand the drift of the deep murmurs that reached his ears, the crowd seemed to part of its own volition, and, through the passage, came half a dozen men bearing a long stick of timber, about four inches square, up to the doors. It was light enough for me to see that the men had black faces and white necks, black hands and white wrists.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

At a low signal these men heaved the end of the timber against the doors. It did not yield to the first stroke of the primitive battering ram, and another and another was given. While this battering was going on I moved to the other doors, where I saw other men with black faces and hands, white necks and wrists, and light straight hair, chopping in the doors, which seemed to be barricaded on the inside with something heavy and strong. As the doors gave way pistol shots rang out, the lights in the court room were extinguished and there was much yelling and cheering. Directly a black man, with clanking chains, was brought out amid the yells of the multitude and hustled down Water Street to the west. Another black man with rattling chains was hurried out Clinton Street to the south. Each of these men was followed by shouting, exultant crowds, while the real Jerry was taken by a few men across the bridge and thence over the "underground railroad" to Canada and freedom.

Without further demonstration the assembled thousands melted away. Two hours after it was difficult to find enough people gathered together to make the legal definition of a mob.

Next day the officials arrested about a score of persons for participating in the successful resistance to the execution of the Fugitive Slave Law, since known as the Jerry Rescue. Those arrested were taken to Auburn, where United States Judge Conkling, the father of Roscoe Conkling, held them to answer before a United States Grand Jury. They were afterwards compelled to go to Albany and other places, but if any of them were convicted and punished my memory is at fault.

Nor am I certain that the leading women of Syracuse gathered thirty silver three-cent pieces and sent them to the Judge, with the message: "Remember Judas, go thou and do likewise." I know it was common report at the time that they had done so.

MRS. MARGARET SABINE'S REMINISCENCES

(Published in November, 1897.)

The celebration of the centennial of the birthday of the Rev. Samuel J. May, whose memory we all delight to honor, recalls to my mind many anti-slavery incidents (he was always at the front when anti-slavery questions came up). Mr. May and myself worked together in the sanitary commission all through the war. He from pulpit and rostrum, in the street, in city, town and village—like Peter the Hermit preached the great crusade, while scores of women like myself raised money, cut and made garments, packed boxes and

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

barrels for the use and comfort of the crusaders, for it was a most holy war. My acquaintance with Mr. May dates back before the war and it is of that time I intend to write. I intend to give my personal reminiscence of what history calls the "Celebrated Jerry Rescue Case." If I mention my family often, you must pardon me, for personal reminiscence must always be more or less personal.

Mr. Sabine and myself were both staunch Abolitionists, rather of what was called the rabid order, but he was also a firm believer in obedience to the laws of his country, and when he found the captured runaway negro slave, Jerry, was to be tried before him (he being a United States Commissioner), and that the law was plain that he was to be returned to his master, that no matter how vile the law was, it was the law, he was greatly disturbed. I can see now the distressed look on his face as he told me (confidentially, for it was a secret) about the matter, ending by saying, "It is cowardly to resign before my first case comes to trial; but what else can I do?" I seemed to have an inspiration, and I said: "Hold on to your commission, let no other man have your place. The trial is a week off, let things stand. Shylock never got his pound of flesh, though the law plainly gave it to him."

Mr. Sabine never mentioned the subject to me again, and you may be sure I never did to him, but you know women never could keep secrets, and somehow this one leaked out, and the Rev. Mr. May found out the secret, and another Abolitionist whose name I do not remember, (I am sure it will be remembered in the great day), who was a singer of the anti-slavery songs, particularly a very taking one about working in rice fields dank and low. Dank in the dictionary means damp, moist; but it meant a great deal more than that as he used to sing it—dank and low. Well, he also got hold of that secret—"A little leaven, leavens the whole lump."

Mr. Sabine's office was in a building standing about where Mrs. Wieting's new opera house now stands, and when the day and the hour of the trial came on I took my stand with a friend on the old Salina Street canal bridge to watch the affair. When Jerry, heavily ironed, accompanied by his overseer, several other Southern men and the United States officers who had him in charge started up the stairs that led to the office of the Commissioner, thirty, forty, I do not know how many men, sprang suddenly from some place and also went up the stairs. Mr. Sabine said then there was a terrible time. The poor negro did not know friend from foe, and as well as he could he fought them all.

You will know the fight was fierce when I tell you the windows, frames, as well as the glass, were broken and every piece of furniture in the neatly fitted up office of the new commissioner was in

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

splinters. The Abolition Party a few days afterward offered to repair damages, but Mr. Sabine declined the offer, saying it was unnecessary, as his resignation had been forwarded to headquarters.

The rescue was rather a dangerous subject of conversation in those days, but I can well remember the twinkle in Mr. May's kind eyes whenever I mentioned Jerry.

MRS. LUCY WATSON'S STATEMENT

(Published May 30, 1894.)

Mrs. Lucy Watson, colored, was, in 1851, Susan Watkins, a girl of 16, living with her parents in Irving Street. She told the following story:

I was ironing when the alarm sounded. An Abolitionist convention was in session in the hall near where the Courier building now stands, and, hearing the alarm, adjourned. I started downtown and a man called, "Tell your people there's a fugitive arrested." I went to the Clinton Street bridge, which was so crowded that the officers made us move on for fear it would break down. While we were there Lear ran over the bridge and someone in the crowd called, "There's Jerry's master." He called back that he wasn't. And he was so frightened in his hurry to get away that he fell and broke his leg. He had it set in Rochester, he was so afraid of the people here. (Probably a current version of the incident of the Rochester deputy having a broken arm.)

I went home and had no more than reached there when there was a rap on the door and when I opened it William Thomson was there. And he says, "I've got Jerry." Then my sister Frances got out and my sister and I made a queen's chair like the children make with their hands and we carried him into the house that way, Thomson steadying him.

We lived in the basement. When we got him there Jerry was awfully frightened. His face was bleeding and his hands shackled. He explained his bruises in this way: When the crowd broke open the door the officer was so frightened that he put Jerry in front of him to protect himself until he got to the door, then slipped away. Jerry got a stone in the forehead before the crowd appreciated that they had him.

We started to get the shackles off. We worked a good while with a hammer and flatiron, and finally broke them. Mrs. Mahala Robbins and I buried them in the garden, for we knew it was high treason if we were discovered.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

Then we tried to get someone to file off the handcuffs. We finally got Peter Lilly, the blacksmith, after we had been there twice, to come and do it. He was an Abolitionist and he was so excited when he found that we had Jerry that he could scarcely file them.

Then we put some women's clothes on Jerry and took him into the back yard and boosted him over the back fence, and that was the last we saw of him.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS OF JERRY RESCUE

(Written by Ella B. Moffett and Published in Syracuse Herald, September 1, 1899.)

Excerpts form the Moffett story are given only where there are additional details or variations from the stories preceding in this volume.

This slave was known as William Henry, or Jerry, a mulatto of medium size, athletic, well-proportioned and squarely built, who had come to Syracuse about a year before. Jerry was born in Buncombe County, North Carolina, about 1812. Two years before his birth his mother was sold by the "crier" to the highest bidder, William Henry, a slave-holder, who paid $450 for her. About 1818 Henry, with his wife and stepson, John McReynolds, and several slaves, including Jerry and his mother Celia, moved by wagon from North Carolina, through Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky and Illinois, to Marion County, Missouri, where they settled.

The fact that Jerry had been voluntarily taken to Illinois, a free State, was afterwards used in the trial at Albany of his rescuers as a reason for considering him beyond the power of a United States marshal. In 1845 Henry died and Jerry was sold to a man named Miller, and again to John McReynolds, the stepson of Henry. Jerry developed ap aptitude for business and was often sent to the neighboring towns to sell produce. He learned carpentry and cooperage, at which last occupation he became a clever and expert workman.

After Jerry's first break and recapture, Marshal Allen hurried after Sheriff Gardiner, and commanded him, in the name of the United States, to bring the militia to his aid. The sheriff, mistaking his duty, called on Captain Prendergast, who ordered out his company of State militia, but Colonel Vandenburgh countermanded the order. "If the United States," he said, "with their marshals and

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

army can't take a slave from so peaceable a city as Syracuse, they are in a bad business. Anyhow my soldiers shall not voluntarily help them; they shall never be kidnappers with my consent." This act of Vandenburgh's was soon known through the city and greatly praised, but the marshals were disappointed.

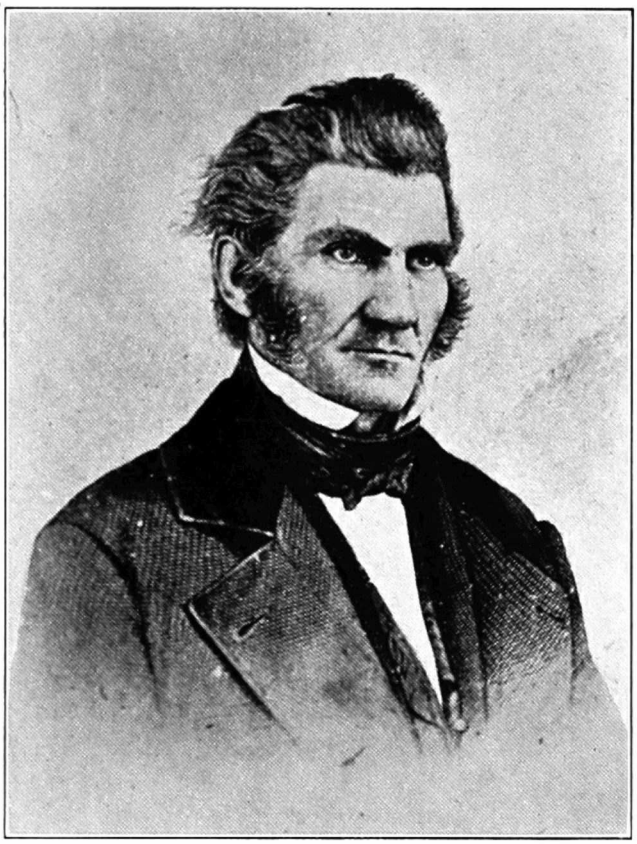
Meanwhile Jerry had become so furious that the Chief of Police went to Samuel J. May and begged that he would go to him and try to quiet him. "So I followed him into the little room," writes May in his "Recollections of the Anti-Slavery Conflict." "Jerry was a horrible object. I was left alone with him and sat down by his side. As soon as I could get him to hear me, I said 'Jerry, do try to be calm.' 'Would you be calm,' he roared out, 'with these irons upon you? What have I done to be treated so? Take off these handcuffs and then if I do not fight my way through these fellows that have got me here then you may make me a slave.' Thus he raved on, till, in a momentary interval, I whispered, 'Jerry, we are going to rescue you; do be more quiet.' After this I went to the office of Dr. Hiram Hoyt."

According to some accounts, Jerry, after his escape the last time, was taken to several homes of the colored people before he was removed by James Davis and Jason Hoyt to the house of Caleb Davis. Jerry was disguised in a dress, hood and shawl. The Davis house was in Orange Street, near Genesee Street. Mr. Hoyt owned this property as well as the house adjoining it in Orange Street, where he lived and kept a carriage shop.

To these three men, James Davis, Jason S. Hoyt and Caleb Davis, was due much of the success of Jerry's hiding and final escape from the city. The part which "Cale" Davis, as he was commonly called, played in this bit of history, was unique. He was a butcher of rough exterior and great physical strength who had come to Syracuse from Vermont in the early days. He soon become known to all the city as a rank pro-slavery man. It is said that he never met the sweet-tempered Samuel May in public without reviling him, and one would have thought his roof would have been the last on earth to shelter the hunted slave.

But in spite of his reputation as a "hot-headed" pro-slavery Democrat, "Cale" Davis was by no means a hard-hearted man. His strong instinct for "fair play" under all circumstances, and great desire to see justice done to this outraged human being, made him ready to undertake the most difficult part of the affair. For four days he successfully harbored Jerry, though it was commonly reported that the latter had already been sent to Canada, while he himself was constantly on the street cursing the Abolitionists and the whole business. Jerry, meanwhile, was in a frenzy of fear and

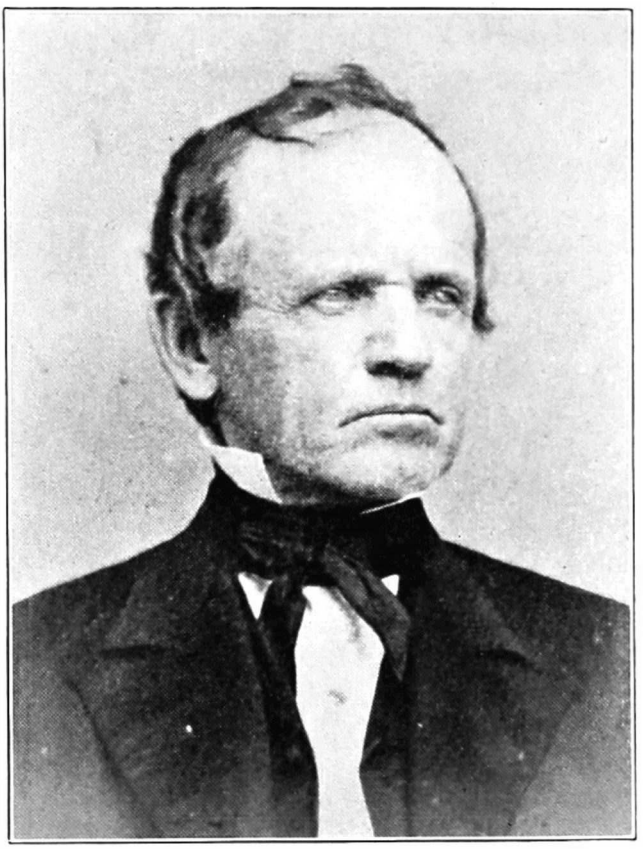
THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM



DR. HIRAM HOYT

In whose office in South Warren Street the secret meeting was held to make arrangements to rescue Jerry.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM



DR. LYMAN CLARY

Who was active in Abolition affairs and one of the signers of the bonds of those indicted in the Jerry Rescue cases.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

excitement lest he should be discovered, but plans for his escape to Canada were soon completed. James Davis found that one of the gate keepers on the road to Canada was an Odd Fellow, so he joined the order and in a few days had the password.

On the Sunday following the rescue, as the bells were ringing for evening service, Caleb Davis drove out into the country to collect beef, as was his custom. He stopped at the Syracuse House for a cigar and drove on without exciting suspicion. But in the bottom of the cart, covered with sacking, lay Jerry, armed and anxious. The team was a span of very fleet horses furnished by ex-Mayor Jason C. Woodruff, a Hunker Democrat. James Davis, on horseback and disguised as a negro, rode out twelve miles to see and instruct the toll-gate keepers. Jason S. Hoyt also joined the party later.

In the newspapers and upon broadsides appeared this notice:

MASS CONVENTION

In SYRACUSE at the CITY HALL on TUESDAY, the FOURTEENTH OF OCTOBER. To take into consideration the Principles of the American Government and the extent to which they are trampled under by the Fugitive Slave Law.

Let the Women of Onondaga County Be There.

COME ONE, COME ALL and DEVOTE ONE DAY to JUSTICE and LIBERTY

A large body of people assembled on the appointed day. Among the speakers was Samuel J. May, who emphasized the principles that "nothing can sanction or legalize injustice," and that "no law subversive of natural right has any obligation." He said in part:

"The citizens of Syracuse and Onondaga County did not, on the first of October violate the law; they set at naught an unrighteous edict; they trampled upon tyranny. When the people saw a man dragged through the streets, chained and held down in a cart by four or six others who were upon him; treated as if he were the worst of felons, and learnt that it was only because he has assumed to be what God made him to be—a man—and not a slave—when this came to be known throughout the street, there was a mighty throbbing of the public heart, and all but unanimous uprising against the outrage. Indignation flashed from every eye; abhorrence of the Fugitive Slave Law poured in burning words from every tongue. The very stones cried out. If that were sinful, then there were few if any saints in all our town that night. If that were treason, then there were few patriots here."

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

ADDITIONAL EXCERPTS FROM SPEECH OF THE REV. SAMUEL J. MAY

(In Syracuse, October 14, 1851.)

This meeting was called "to consider the principles of the American Government and the extent to which they are trampled under foot by the Fugitive Slave Law," occasioned by an attempt to enslave an inhabitant of Syracuse. The speech was printed in full by Agan & Summers at the Standard office, and it bears the date 1851.

In addition to the quotation made above by Ella B. Moffett, there is the following that is pertinent as well as argumentative upon the rescue:

"There was no concert of action except that to which a common humanity impelled the people. * * * Persons who had never been known to manifest the least interest in the cause of our enslaved countrymen were loud in their cries of Shame! Shame! Quickened, roused, urged on by this almost universal denunciation of the outrage upon freedom, some men, more ardent, less patient or cautious than the rest, broke through the slight partition between the victim and his liberty, struck off the chains that bound him, and gave him 'a God speed' to a country where man hunters may not follow him. Then such a shout of gladness rose upon the air, as never made this welkin ring before. It was not my privilege to witness the release. I came as soon as my feet could bring me (from the Dillaye Block) to the scene and joined the loud acclaim. If that were sinful, then there were few if any saints in all our town that night. If that were treason, then there were few patriots here.

"And now there are men (so-called honorable men), going about to inflict heavy pecuniary penalties, imprisonment and, if they can compass it, death upon those individuals, who may be proved to have aided and abetted the rescue of a man from slavery; to punish as felons those who mean to obey God, and respect the rights of their fellow beings! Nay, but they say it is for violating law, you are to be punished. Will they then—Americans as they are—will they maintain that a government cannot enact a law so bad that the people would be justified in tramping it under foot? If they take this position, they condemn utterly the fathers of the Revolution. But if they stand upon the American doctrine, that 'resistance to tyrants is obedience to God'—then I fain would have them tell me, if they can, what law could be more tyrannical than this, which some of our citizens are accused of having violated? For one, I cannot believe that the public sentiment of this nation will sustain our rulers in their attempt to enforce obedience to this outrageous enactment.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

"But, fellow citizens, whatever may betide any of us, for the aid we have given, or the sympathy we have shown to a hunted fellow man, let us meet it firmly, in the spirit of Christian fortitude and long suffering. Let there be no violence offered or thought of towards the misguided men who are attempting to execute this great unrighteousness. They cannot dispose of us by any summary proceeding. They cannot deny us the due process of law. They cannot withhold from us a trial by jury—nor, if we should need it, can they forbid us a writ of habeas corpus. We can venture to wait. There is no dire necessity upon us to resort to any violence in order to escape ourselves, or to rescue any of our number from a doom, which every man accounts far worse than death. They cannot make us slaves. Our legalized persecutors may take from us our money, but they cannot rob us of our respect for the rights of man and our consciousness of good intention. They may incarcerate our bodies, but they cannot imprison our souls. They cannot confine our thoughts or the the expression of them within a dungeon. They cannot build walls so high that our prayers shall not overleap them, and go up to the God of the oppressed. They may (though it is too monstrous to be apprehended in this age and country), they may perhaps inflict death upon us, but they would only set our spirits free a little sooner and send them into the more immediate presence of Him who has filled our hearts with this love of liberty."

APPENDIX.

On the 15th of October, the day after the foregoing speech was delivered, eight of our fellow citizens were arrested by the U. S. marshal, to be taken before the U. S. District Judge on the charge of having prevented the execution of this law. So soon as it was known that they were thus set upon by the agents of our government they and a large number of our fellow citizens assembled in the Congregational Church to consider what should be done. There was but one opinion expressed, but one feeling manifested, and that was to meet the question calmly at the tribunals of our country. Here was no emergency that would warrant any uprising of the people—any interference in behalf of the sufferers. They would have all the benefits of the "due process of law," "trials by jury," etc., and there was no little reason to believe that if any of the arrested should be proved to have aided in the rescue of Jerry—it would be hard to get a jury of their peers who could find them guilty of a crime worthy of fine and imprisonment. Resolutions to this effect were passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned—the arrested to go in bonds and many of the arrested to go, as bound with them, to Auburn, to be examined by Judge Conkling.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

Much deep feeling was manifested by the crowd around the depot—but no offer of resistance to the law was so much as spoken of. The same populace that could not bear to see a poor man seized and reduced to slavery, consented that eight of our worthy fellow citizens, against whom there had never before been a breath of reproach, should be arraigned for "the rescue." For the sentiment was universal that for such a deed, if they were found to have committed it, they could not be made to appear like criminals in the eyes of a people who love liberty and revere justice. If our government shall punish them for giving to a man his "unalienable rights"—the disgrace will attach to the government and not to the sufferers.

No attempt was made, on the examination, to repel the charge by opposing testimony, and so all who had been arrested were of course bound over to be tried for the alleged offense. To all this our citizens have quietly submitted, and yet there are those who are clamoring it over the country that we of Syracuse are not a law-abiding people. Some who dwell with us have joined in this cry. Shame upon them and upon all who are circulating the scandal. The citizens of Syracuse will ever abide by law—they only trample upon tyranny.

It was pretty generally known throughout the country that there is prevalent in this city and county a strong anti-slavery sentiment, and, more especially, a deep abhorrence of the Fugitive Slave Law. As if on purpose to set this public feeling at defiance and challenge us to make it manifest, Mr. Webster declared to an assembly of our citizens last June that that execrable law would be enforced here; aye, in the midst of the next Anti-Slavery Convention, that should be held in this city. Such a threat was not adapted to allay the rising of an opposite determination. We are not all here quite so craven and slavish as to bow at once submissively to such a brow-beating as he attempted to give us. His words rankled in the bosoms of a great many. This too was well known. If, therefore, the District Attorney and United States Deputy Marshal had intended to entrap the ardent opponents of this most odious law and tempt them to the commission of acts for which they might arrest them as disturbers of the peace, if not as traitors, they could not have selected a better time nor devised more certain provocatives to that end. They chose a day when our city was full of the people of the country around about, who had come in to attend the County Agricultural Fair and Liberty Party Convention—the first anti-slavery meeting held here since Mr. Webster uttered his threat.

Then they had not provided themselves with a sufficient constabulary force to make it even appear difficult to take their victim

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

out of their grasp. The scene exhibited in the streets, of Jerry contending with his legalized kidnappers and screaming for help, had exasperated the feelings of the people to the utmost, and then he was kept for hours, separated from the eager throng by only two glazed doors, and within them a slight board partition. So little forethought had these men who undertook, under the cover of this law, to perpetrate this outrage upon the feelings of our community, that they had not procured a proper warrant for the aid of "the military." Consequently the poor, doomed man was left in a very exposed place, guarded by only half a dozen marshals and constables, some of whom had too much humanity left in their hearts not to know that they were doing a dastardly and cruel deed and to be in some measure enervated by self-condemnation.

Under such circumstances what could be expected but that Jerry would be rescued? We cannot be too grateful that it was done at the expense of only one broken limb and at the loss of no life. If now our government, at the instigation of Southern demagogues and Northern pseudo-patriots, goes about to make out of this great transaction a great offense against law and government, they will only bring them both into great contempt—for the people know that the claims of natural justice and of suffering humanity are higher than of the law of September 18th, 1850, or the authority of those who would attempt to enforce it.

The occurrence of October 1st has abundantly verified the words of Daniel Webster, uttered in a speech on the state of the Union, in New York, March 15th, 1837: "The question of Slavery has not only attracted attention as a question of politics, but it has struck a far deeper, deeper chord. It has arrested the religious feeling of the country. It has taken hold on the consciences of men. * * * To coerce it into silence, to endeavor to restrain its free expression, to seek to compress and confine it, warm as it is, and more heated as such endeavors would inevitably render it—should all this be attempted? I know nothing, even in the Constitution, or the Union itself, which would not be endangered by the explosion which might follow."

LATER COMPILATION OF "RESCUE" INCIDENTS

Excerpts From Chapter on Jerry Rescue in Gurney S. Strong's "Early Landmarks of Syracuse," Published in 1894, Wherein Story Differs or Is Expanded.

The rescue of the fugitive slave Jerry, in the fall of 1851, was probably the most stirring event in the history of Syracuse. This

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

city was at that time a busy, active place of some 25,000 inhabitants. The citizens were intelligent, cultured and very patriotic. Public meetings in the Town Hall for the consideration of public questions were common. To be sure, in the early days of the immediate emancipation movement, those who came to Syracuse to propound abolition had met with a reception which literally made them feel "at home;" cabbage and more offensive missiles had been showered upon the speakers by an excited audience and the meetings had been broken up. But far sooner than in most places, William Lloyd Garrison and his friends, on the one hand, and Gerrit Smith and his friends, on the other, persuaded the people in Syracuse to listen quietly to their pleading. Some converts were soon made, especially by the less radical wing led by Gerrit Smith. * * *

In the hearing before Commissioner Sabine in the afternoon and before Jerry first attempted to escape, James Lear of Newark, Knox County, Missouri, testified that he knew Jerry (pointing to the alleged fugitive); became acquainted with him in 1820, when he first met John M. Reynolds, and knew Jerry till 1845; knew Jerry's mother, and if living she was with John M. Reynolds or his father-in-law, William Henry, in Marion County, Missouri; knew Jerry's mother after his birth.

The sympathy of the crowd inside and outside the Commissioner's office was clearly with Jerry, while the case, as it stood, seemed to be clearly against him. After the case had been adjourned at half-past two for half an hour, that a larger room might be obtained, Jerry, acting upon the impulse of the moment, threw himself into the crowd, rushed down the stairs and into the street and started on a run for liberty. * * *

After Jerry was recaptured the officials who had the arrest in charge became alarmed during the afternoon and tried to get the militia out to keep order. Marshal Allen commanded the Sheriff of the county, William C. Gardiner, to bring the militia to his aid. Sheriff Gardiner could not do this, but instead ordered Capt. Edward R. Prendergast to get his company in order, ready for action if needed. But there had, as yet, been not the slightest breach of the peace and the crowd had been remarkably well behaved, considering the excitement. The news that the militia had been called out caused a general murmur of indignation in the city. This reached the ears of Colonel Origen Vandenburgh, who at once countermanded the orders of the Sheriff, which the latter had no right to give. It might be added that Colonel Vandenburgh was the moving spirit in originating the scheme of the "underground railroad" in New York City. The police of the city, with the exception of a few men who had been pressed into the service of the

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

government, were in sympathy with the general feeling. The United States officials, few in numbers as they were, were at the mercy of the crowd. At 5 o'clock the examination of the prisoner was resumed. At 7 o'clock the Commissioner adjourned the court till 8 o'clock the following morning. Then came the rescue, the rescuing party blackened like negroes and otherwise disguised. * * *

Jerry was received at the door by Peter Hollenbeck and William Gray, both colored men, and the latter a fugitive slave. His body was mostly naked, being covered only by tattered pantaloons and shirt, which hung on him in rags. He was suffering from a wounded rib and other bruises received by the harsh treatment of his captors. His powerful frame was perfectly helpless because of his shackles.

Jerry was taken in a sort of triumphal procession through the great crowd of people to the Syracuse House and thence to the railroad depot, but the mass of humanity was so dense that the carriage to take him off could not come to him. Several rescuers now ran in opposite directions through the crowd, crying: "Fire! fire! fire!" In a short time Jerry was left alone with a few brave men, who lifted him, groaning with pain, into a carriage. It was a long and wandering ride that he took that night. He was finally taken to a colored man's house in the eastern part of the city, where his shackles were with some difficulty removed. He was then clad in female attire and taken to the house of Caleb Davis, his rescuers not being willing to trust his colored frieneds. * * *

As to just what sort of a man Jerry was, it is hard at the present day to learn. His friends, the Abolitionists, praised him in the highest terms. The "Patriotic" papers made him out the most worthless of negroes. Said the Syracuse Journal at that time: "We notice in all sections of the country the papers represent that Jerry was a very bad fellow, that he was a thief, etc., and had been in the penitentiary four times in this city. This, if true, would have very little to do with the merits and demerits of the Fugitive Slave Law or Jerry's rescue. It could not be expected that a man brought up 35 years in the midst of slaves, where all the commandments of the Decalogue are set at naught, would have a very nice sense of morals. Yet Jerry was not so bad as many represent. His commitments to the penitentiary all grew out of difficulties in regard to the woman he was living with. He was never charged or convicted as a thief or a robber."

If the more really earnest men and women of Syracuse took a high-minded satisfaction in the influence the "Rescue" would have upon the treatment in the North of the escaping fugitives, the less intellectual women were not above getting pleasure in trying to

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

torture the defeated United States officials in a very feminine way. They carefully packed up Jerry's shackles and sent them by express as a present to President Fillmore. They presented James R. Lawrence, counsel for the government in the Jerry case, with thirty pieces of silver—three-cent pieces—as the price of betraying innocent blood. (Both these alleged incidents are legendary.)

The news of Jerry's rescue traveled throughout the entire country; it became a national affair. In the course of a week all the newspapers in New York State and many beyond had published some account of the "Jerry Rescue.". By far the greater number severely censured the entire proceedings, though but one paper in Syracuse, the "Copperhead" Star, took this stand. There was great indignation aroused.

WHAT OTHERS THOUGHT

The Albany Argus, the chief Democratic paper, said: "The recital of the outrages upon the law and its ministrators at Syracuse will be read with mingled astonishment and shame. They are a reproach to the city where they were permitted, a burning disgrace to the State at large. This is the first instance of forcible resistance to the execution of the laws of the Union that has occurred in this State. It is the first instance where an armed mob has attempted, with or without success, to overcome a judicial tribunal by violence, to trample on the law."

The Washington Union seriously recommended that the city be placed in a state of siege by the army, and be declared out of the Union until it repented of its sins and manifested a disposition to return to its duty.

On the 15th of October it began to look serious for the men who participated in the rescue of Jerry. Then came the arrests and the arraignments before Judge Conkling at Auburn, when the prisoners were accompanied by a large party of Syracusans to Auburn and the giving of bail was made a sort of function. Judge Conkling decided that it was "proper to presume that there is no testimony tending to fix upon the defendants the guilt of any higher offense" than that of "having unlawfully aided in the escape of an alleged fugitive from labor." The prisoners were held for the Grand Jury of the next United States District Court, to be held at Buffalo on the second Tuesday of November. Bonds to the amount of $2,000 for each of the four white men were signed by ex-Governor W. H. Seward, Lyman Clary, Oliver T. Burt, Henry Gifford, R. W. Washburn, George Barnes, W. E. Abbott, Abner Bates, John Ames, Hiram Putnam, E. W. Leavenworth, C. B. Sedgwick, Samuel Mead, Hiram Hoyt, Daniel McDougall, Charles

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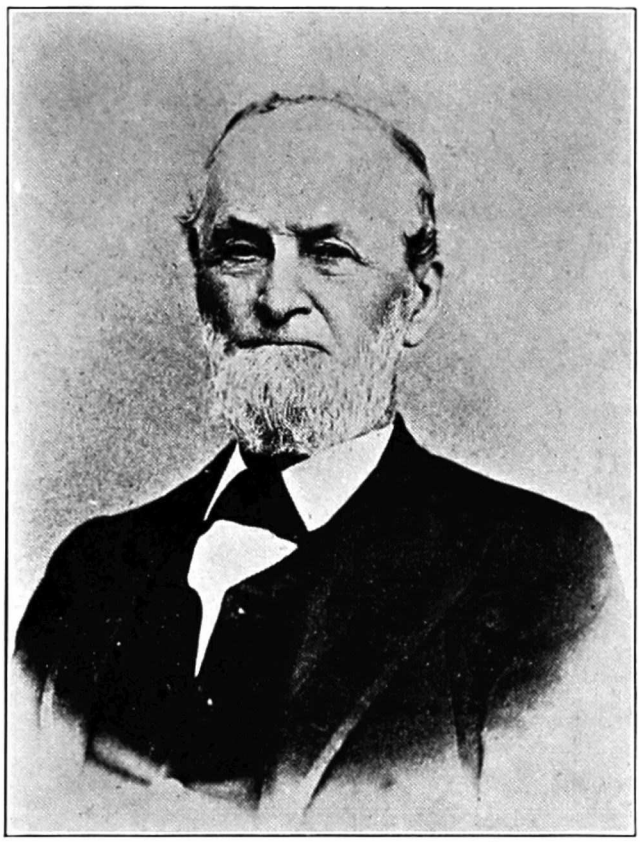
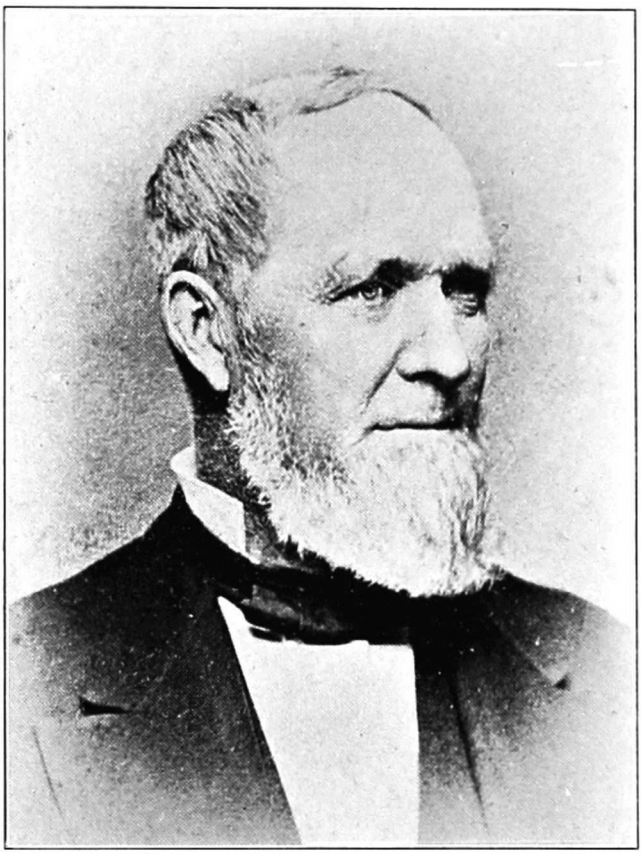


MONTGOMERY MERRICK

Who slammed the door shut when Jerry had passed through in his get-away from the U. S. Commissioner's office.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM



CHARLES MERRICK

Who gave Jerry the wink when he asked if he should try to get away at the time of the first break of the prisoner.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

A. Wheaton, R. A. Yoe, Charles Leonard and Alanson Thorp. Similar bonds for $500 each, for the four colored men, were signed by ex-Governor Seward.

After the examination of the prisoners was over Mr. Seward invited all the party who came from Syracuse in behalf of the prisoners to his beautiful residence, and there entertained them delightfully.

The following is a list of witnesses introduced for the government by James R. Lawrence: B. L. Higgins, Joseph Williamson, Joseph F. Sabine, George A. Green, John W. Jones, Thomas M. Masson, Henry M. Baker, Henry Ormsby, Sylvester House, Henry Shattuck, Charles Woodruff, Edward Prendergast, Oliver C. Stuart, Henry W. Allen, Benjamin P. Kinney, William Baldwin, Paige Newton, Charles P. Cole, Alonzo Torrey, George Blair and Willard Johnson.

In time the cases were transferred to the United States District Court at Canandaigua. At the time of the sitting of the court, Gerrit Smith went to Canandaigua and addressed a large crowd in the open air, using such forcible arguments that no jury could be empanelled on which there were not several who had formed an opinion against the law. So Judge Hall let all the "Jerry Rescue Cases" fall to the ground forever. * * *

The men indicted were hardly fair selections. Most of them had nothing to do with the rescue beyond a little active sympathy. Although Gerrit Smith, Charles A. Wheaton and the Rev. Samuel J. May had published in the papers an acknowledgment that they had assisted all they could in the rescue of Jerry, the attorney did not see fit to bring any of them to trial. * * *

In answer to a call signed by 800 citizens of Onondaga County, a meeting of those who "respected law and order" was held in the City Hall, October 25, 1851. The meeting was called to order by Harvey Baldwin, and Moses D. Burnet was elected the presiding officer. The following vice-presidents were elected: B. Davis Noxon, Johnson Hall, Phares Gould, Miles W. Bennett, James Lynch, Lewis H. Redfield, Israel S. Spencer, Harvey Loomis, J. Stanford, John G. Forbes, Thomas Spencer, Rufus Stanton, Otis Bigelow, Hervey Rhoades, Daniel Kellogg and E. S. Phillips. The following secretaries were elected: W. H. Watson, Stephen D. Dillaye, Cornelius L. Alvord, Benjamin L. Higgins and E. C. Adams. The following committee on ordinances was appointed: George F. Comstock, John F. Wyman, W. M. Watress, Stephen D. Dillaye and Thomas T. Davis.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

The resolutions adopted stated that the "citizens of Syracuse and of the County of Onondaga deeply regret the commission of the outrage upon the law, and would express our unqualified abhorrence of the monstrous transactions," and "we repel the accusation that any number of the citizens of Onondaga were engaged in the affair." This meeting was all the "law and order" people did to prove their strength in Syracuse. * * *

Ever since the Civil War Syracusans have been wont to ascribe to the Jerry Rescue the beginning of effective resistance to slavery in the North. There was not another attempt made to execute the Fugitive Slave Law in this part of the State. There was perfect safety here for fugitive slaves. And furthermore, the strength of the Anti-Slavery Party was increased not only here but far outside, by the successful outcome of the affair. Syracuse was almost the only city of any size in the North where the leaders of the Anti-Slavery faction had in their ranks many of the leading business men, lawyers, physicians and clergymen. But the distinguishing characteristic of the "Jerry Rescue" is that the leaders carried through the rescue, even in spite of the likely acquittal of Jerry, because they wished to work a moral effect upon the community. It was the work of enthusiasts in the cause of "freedom to the negro," rather than of sympathizers with a negro about to be returned to slavery.

GERRIT SMITH ON FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

Excerpts From Argument in Syracuse, June, 1852, on Trial of Henry W. Allen, U. S. Deputy Marshal, for Kidnapping.

It is admitted in the pleadings that the prisoner had a part in this undertaking to sink his fellow-man into slavery. It is true that these admissions do not make that part as extensive as it really was, and as extensive as we should have shown it to be had we been allowed to produce witnesses. * * *

And now, what is the prisoner's excuse for this high crime against his brother man? It is that he acted under law and according to law. Well, if he did, then he is innocent. If not, then he is guilty. I admit that this is the hinge on which this case turns. If that is a constitutional, valid law, under which the prisoner acted, and if he rightly interpreted its scope and claims, then he should be acquitted —and, otherwise convicted. * * *

We hear it said that the bare evidence of a law should be admitted to be presumptive evidence that it is constitutional—such

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

strong presumptive evidence that the officer may feel entirely free to act upon it. Our reply to this is—that if the law is immoral and wicked, its immorality and wickedness constitute presumptive evidence of its unconstitutionality. Especially prompt and full should be the presumption that the law is unconstitutional if its immorality and wickedness are flagrant, as in the case of the law for slavery. Not to take this ground is deeply to dishonor the Constitution. If an execution is put into the hands of the Sheriff for the purpose of having him levy on hogs, he may take it for granted that all is right—for he knows that hogs are property. But if a process is put into his hands for the purpose of having him treat a human being as property, and reduce that human being to slavery, then he is bound to pause, and to inquire, whether the law for that process can possibly be a Constitutional, valid law. It is often said, too, that it is hard for an officer to be punished for his ignorance of the law. Yes—but is not his title to our sympathies far weaker than that of the victims of his ignorance? By means of this ignorance a freeman of the County of Onondaga might be torn from his wife and children to spend his remaining years under the lash of the taskmaster upon a Southern plantation.* * *

Positions argued:

First—Law is unconstitutional because it withholds the trial by jury.

Second—Because the Commissioner is not authorized by the Constitution to do what the law requires of him.

Third—Because it offers a bribe.

Fourth—Because it allows the suits under it to be decided solely on affidavits.

Fifth—Because it provides for disposing of the cases under it by ex-parte testimony.

Sixth—Because it vests judicial power in State Courts.

Seventh—Because of its interference of the legislative with the judicial department of government.

Eighth—Because it requires no testimony.

Ninth—Because it fixes the compensation for the loss of the servant at the same sum in all cases.

Tenth—Because in the public or criminal prosecutions under it, it allows the Court no wider range for fixing upon the appropriate penalty.

Eleventh—Because it extends to matters entirely beyond and foreign to the Constitutional clause which it purports to carry out.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

Twelfth—Because it recognizes the constitutionality of slavery in the Territories.

Thirteenth—Because it recognized the constitutionality of slavery in the District of Columbia.

Fourteenth—Because it undertakes to suspend the writ of habeas corpus.

Fifteenth—For the reason that Congress has no right to legislate upon the subject.

Sixteenth—That the fugitive servant act of 1850 is unconstitutional because the Constitution is anti-slavery and not pro-slavery.

Seventeenth—Because the constitutional clause, which it purports to carry out, does not refer to slaves.

And now are we willing to believe that our fathers intended to make this whole land the slaveholders' hunting ground, and to require "all good citizens to aid and assist" in running down the innocent human prey? Are we willing to believe that they were the most merciless of men. * * *

My argument is ended. How came this grossly unconstitutional law to be enacted? How came such able lawyers as Clay and Webster to favor its enactment? The solution is that they acted in the case, not as lawyers, but as politicians. They had a compromise to make, and make it they must, and make it they did, at whatever expense to an oppressed and outraged race, and at whatever expense to their reputation as lawyers. * * *

I need not consume more time in showing that our fathers, who created the American Government, erected it "to establish justice and secure the blessings of liberty", and not to be a gigantic slave-catcher, and to expend in slave-catching the contributions which honest toil is compelled to make to the national treasury. I need not add that their willingness to have their government and treasury put to such cruel and shameless and infamous uses proves that the American people have fallen into very low depths of degeneracy and depravity.

GERRIT SMITH REMINISCENCES

(By Dr. Ernst Held)

I met Gerrit Smith several times at "Aunt Rosa's," when several of the old Abolitionists of the early 'fifties gathered—such men as Peter Burns, Charles A. Wheaton, Dr. Hiram Hoyt, Mr. Crandall of the Standard, Dr. Jackson and Gen. Chaplin of Glen Haven, etc.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

The political parties at this ante-bellum period of 1856 were in a volcano-like state of compressed passion and dangerous tension, caused by Calhoun's and his followers secession agitation in Congress. They began their preparation for the presidential campaign quite early in that year. Already on February 21 the American or Nativist Party met in Philadelphia and nominated Millard Fillmore and Andrew J. Donelson for their candidates. On June 6 the Democrats nominated in Cincinnati James Buchanan and Breckenridge, and the Whigs accepted soon after that Millard Fillmore, the Nativist party leader, as their candidate. Then entered the old Abolitionist Party under the name of the Liberty Party, and nominated Gerrit Smith as their banner bearer, who already in 1848 in the same capacity had polled 296,232 votes.

The Abolitionists of Syracuse and Central New York held an enthusiastic ratification meeting in the old Corinthian Hall on North Salina Street, and honored me with the selection of secretary of the meeting. In accepting the honor I said that as the refugees of the liberal parties in Europe, who had fought on the barricades of Paris, Berlin, Vienna and elsewhere in 1848 and 1849, and who now had gained the right to cast their first presidential vote as naturalized citizens of America, they could not logically or conscientiously vote with the Democrats, who fought on the same side with Calhoun and his Southern allies, nor with the Whigs, who accepted the Nativist Party candidate Fillmore as their own, and with him the two illiberal planks of the Nativist platform, that only native born Americans should fill any offices and that immigrants should wait twenty-one years before they could become naturalized. That, I said, would surely turn the foreign vote away from Whigs and Democrats and for Gerrit Smith.

A few weeks afterwards, when the new Republican Party was born in Philadelphia, June 17th, with "The Pathfinder," John C. Fremont and Dayton to be the banner bearers, there was another ratification meeting here in Syracuse, at which I was also made one of the secretaries. I then said enthusiastically that now, when there was almost a moral certainty that Fremont could be elected, the foreign vote, which before I thought would go to Gerrit Smith, would turn out in solid phalanx for Fremont.

That prediction was verified in November, for, although Buchanan was elected by 174 electoral votes against 122 for Fremont, the popular vote stood: 2,215,768 for Fremont, as against 1,838,160 for Buchanan.

In a letter to Gerrit Smith I tried to explain the apparent desertion of the foreign voters from the Liberty Party banner, to which I received by return mail a very kind letter from him, in which he

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

said that he was glad to learn that my compatriots would probably all vote for Fremont and that he hoped that Fremont would get a majority of 40,000 in the State of New York. He would remain, however, the standard bearer of the Liberty Party and wished that his personal and Abolitionist Party friends would stay by him, *as he intended to remain in the vanguard during the coming anti-slavery struggle before the American people.*

CELEBRATING JERRY RESCUE DAY

(Address by Mrs. C. D. B. Mills Before the Onondaga Historical Association, May 10, 1912.)

My earliest memory of any important happening here was that of the celebration of the Jerry Rescue. It was held in the round engine house of the Central Railroad in the West End, which was just finished and not yet occupied. I walked there, leading my little baby boy, from the corner of Railroad and Lemon Streets, following the track so as not to lose my way, as I had been but a few days in the city and knew none of the streets.

There was a large audience gathered that sat (on rough board seats—no chairs) throughout the afternoon and listened to most stirring appeals for freedom and condemnation of the Fugitive Slave Law. Mr. May, Gerrit Smith, Lucretia Mott and others spoke. Most impressive of all to me was the able, clear, concise, logical address of Lucretia Mott. She was a Quaker preacher and had had long practice. Those of you who cannot go back to the time when woman occupied an inferior position and was not allowed to speak in public, cannot know the joy of seeing her begin to take her place beside Mr. May. It was indeed an uplift, an inspiration, to look into the shining face of that delicate little woman and listen to her eloquent appeal. You see I had lately been at Oberlin College when Lucy Stone was refused permission to read her graduating thesis, and was told a professor would read it for her, as it would be improper for her to do so. "Then I shall not write it," she said. Oberlin was then the only college open to women in this country.

Another great interest to me were the meetings that gathered every Sunday afternoon in the City Hall for free discussion. They were made up of ministers and people from all the different churches. We had had such meetings in Elyria, where we lived before coming here, and it seemed to me the ideal way of seeking truth, this of marking the different phases of its manifestation through the individual, as no one has the whole truth, and from none is it fully

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

hidden. Then the sense of fellowship and fraternity is so quickened by the ignoring of the bonds that divide and sectarianize. Real communion comes through dropping formalities and entering into the spirit. We had many able speakers, but only men.

Not all are pleasant memories. Nothing that I recall ever involved the City of Syracuse in such ignominy as that mob of rowdies that broke up an Abolition Convention that was to be held here on January 29 and 30, 1861. Mr. May had engaged Convention Hall, and the day before we were to meet the Mayor urged him to prevent the holding of the meeting here lest it provoke a riot, though he acknowledged the right to assemble and promised protection. Twenty of the most influential gentlemen of Syracuse, many of them his parishioners, wrote a letter to Mr. May, telling him that they knew of an organized effort to prevent the holding of the convention, and urged him to use his influence to prevent the assembling thereof, and also promised protection. The committee refused to give up the meeting, and when we gathered at the door of the hall we found it packed with the mob, not a vacant seat, and their chairman was just going onto the platform. Two or three of our speakers also walked up there, but after looking into those desperate faces and seeing one man handling a pistol in his pocket, and hearing their threats, they came down and joined us at the door again. Dr. Pease invited us to his home, where we spent the afternoon, heard Mr. May, Gerrit Smith, Beriah Green, Parker Pillsbury and Susan Anthony talk, and passed resolutions.

The mob celebrated their victory by an evening procession, led by a band of music, and then gathered in Hanover Square, made low, vulgar speeches and burned Mr. May and Susan Anthony in effigy. It was said that their principal speaker had to be picked out of the gutter and carried home.

ESCAPE OF HARRIET POWELL FROM SYRACUSE

Slave Story of September, 1839, Which Awakened Many Abolition Feelings.

(Reprinted From the Sunday Times, Published June 10, 1877.)

There recently died in the Eighth Ward a man—poor and in the lowly walks of life, but in many respects a hero. He belonged to a race which had been despised and downtrodden, but he was nevertheless a man, every inch of him, and his death recalls to mind one affair in which he took a humble part, but from the risk he ran and

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

the manner in which he bore himself in a trying situation, he showed the stuff that heroes are made of. Few of our younger readers can ever realize the horrors of that stupendous evil which was the prime cause of the Rebellion which cost us so much blood and treasure, but which rang the death knell of its grand instigator, slavery. Some faint reminiscences still linger in the so-called "bull-dozing" in certain portions of the South, and to escape from these horrors many of its victims took risks and endured hardships, with adventures which, in a modern novel, would be characterized as too marvelous for reality.

Some of our readers are old enough to remember the intense wave of excitement and reaction against the slavery interest, which was caused by the arrest and rescue of Jerry in 1851. From that time to the Rebellion the operations of the "Underground Railroad" —as the surreptitious transfer of human chattels from slavery in a free country to freedom in a monarchy, was called—were winked at and privately encouraged by many who openly seemed to lean the other way. For years before the reaction occasioned by the Jerry case the affairs of the railroad had to be conducted with great circumspection and secrecy, particularly in the early days, when to be known as an Abolitioniist, or even as an anti-slavery man, was to court disgrace and insult even among personal friends. And this is the main reason why the circumstances of an abduction, which in its day created as great a wave of excitement in this community as did the Jerry Rescue, were never fully made known to the world.

The recent death of Uncle Tom Leonard brings the case of Harriet Powell, the "white lady fugitive," vividly to mind. In the latter part of September, 1839, J. Davenport, a wealthy planter from Mississippi, arrived in the then little village of Syracuse, accompanied by his wife and another lady, much younger, fair and beautiful, and sumptuously dressed, and took rooms at the Syracuse House, then kept by the noted Philo N. Rust. They had come on a visit to relatives of Mrs. Davenport, living in a neighboring village. They occupied the most expensive apartments, were lavish in their expenditures and created a decided sensation in the village. Whenever Mrs. Davenport appeared upon the street or in her coach, she was always accompanied by the beautiful girl, as richly dressed as her older companion, and seemingly entitled to equal courtesy and respect. Callers were frequent at their rooms at the hotel and at first they marvelled why they were not introduced to the other "lady." It was soon rumored by the servants that the supposed beautiful Southern girl was a slave. Numerous were the mortifying mistakes made by some of the stylish visitors who, upon entering the room, would unwittingly address the maid as the mistress.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

$200 Reward

Left the service of the subscriber on the evening of the 7th inst. a Bright Quadroon Servant-girl, about twenty four years of age, named HARRIET. Said girl was about 5 feet high, of a full and well proportioned form, straight light brown hair, dark eyes, approaching to black, of fresh complexion, and so fair that she would generally be taken for white; a prominent mouth with depressed nostrils and receding forehead, readily betrayed to the critical observer the leading traits of the African race. Her demeanor is very quiet, and her deportment modest.

At the time of leaving she had on a black dress of figured poplin. She took with her one green Merino dress; one pink Gingham (checked) do.; one French Muslin figured do.; one Buff, and one light purple Calico do. She wore small rings (with stones) in her ears, and had three chased Gold Rings on her fingers, two of which were set with green and the other with transparent chrystal. She also took with her a plaid blanket Shawl, but left her bonnet, so that her head-dress cannot be described.

In leaving the service of the subscriber, she leaves her aged mother and a younger sister, who are devotedly attached to her, and to whom she has ever appeared much attached. It may be proper also to state, that her conduct as a servant, and her moral deportment so far as the same have come to the knowledge of the subscriber, have hitherto been irreproachable. It is believed that she has been spirited away from the service of the undersigned, by the officious and persevering efforts of certain malicious and designing persons, operating through the agency of the colored people of Syracuse, at which place he had been induced to spend a few days. The subscriber would further add, that he has refused several importunate offers of $2,500 for said girl, for the sole reason that he would never consent to part her from the other members of her family, and it is chiefly with the hope of restoring her to her aged mother and sister, who will be plunged in sorrow at the separation, that this notice is published. The above reward of Two Hundred Dollars will be paid to any person who will deliver said girl to the proprietor Syracuse House, in Syracuse, or one hundred Dollars to any one who will give such information as shall lead to her arrest

Syracuse, October 9th, 1839

J. DAVENPORT

TYPICAL SLAVE ESCAPE NOTICE

Copy of Bill Placarded in Syracuse When Harriet Powell Escaped With the Aid of the Abolitionists in September, 1839

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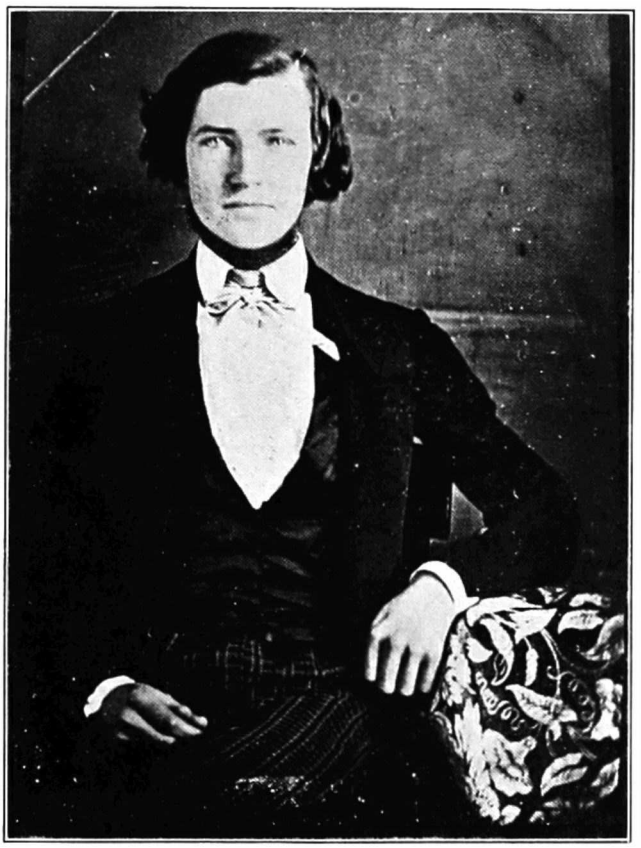

DR. ALFRED MERCER

From picture made about the period of his coming to Syracuse and taking partnership with Dr. Hiram Hoyt, in whose office the secret meeting was held to arrange to rescue Jerry.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

Numerous parties and receptions were given, at which the mistress and slave apparently vied with each other in dress and decorations. Most of the servants of the Syracuse House, of both sexes, were colored, and their sympathies were of course deeply stirred for Harriet. The subject of her freedom was broached to her. Liberty was a boon as dear to her as her life, and she sighed for it, nowithstanding her superior situation and kind treatment. But she shrank from the danger which she would encounter, and anticipating the future, should the attempt to escape prove unsuccessful, her heart failed her when the subject was brought to her mind. Tom Leonard was then a waiter at the Syracuse House and took a deep interest in devising means to restore Harriet to liberty. He communicated her desire to William M. Clarke (father of Capt. H. W. Clarke of this city) at that time Deputy County Clerk, and John B. Owen, a marble dealer in the village, who set about to contrive some plan to spirit her away. Mr. Owen was the first and only person outside the Syracuse House who communicated with Harriet, through Leonard, while Mr. Clarke looked after the outside arrangements and management.

The close of Davenport's visit was near at hand, and word was brought to Mr. Owen by Leonard that the attempt would have to be given up, as Harriet was fearful of failure. Mr. Owen reported this to Mr. Clarke, who told him emphatically that it would not be given up and that he must send back word to her that it should not be a failure, and that she should be protected at whatever cost or hazard. Her thrist for freedom, stimulated by these manly assurances, overcame her fear and, summoning all her courage, she resolved to undertake the risk. The secret of any projected attempt to remove her from her servitude was faithfully kept by the colored people in the hotel and the two white men who had undertaken to see it through. Not even was the most trusted Abolitionist consulted, unless upon some point which might be absolutely necessary toward carrying out the plans. When the subject of her escape was alluded to in their presence the only response was the finger upon the lips.

The 8th of October was the date fixed for their departure for the South by the Davenports, and the evening before a grand farewell reception was to be given them at the house of Maj. William A. Cook, which was in the double brick building next east of the Journal buildings. This was the night selected for Harriet's escape. The plan had been arranged with all its details. Her bundle of clothes was to be thrown to Leonard from the window of the Syracuse House, another colored man was to be at the back door of Major Cook's house, the hour had been fixed for all the details to

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

be executed. A place had been arranged for her first concealment in the house of Mr. Sheppard, a good man and true, who lived a little southeast of Marcellus. Not daring to engage a carriage in the village, Mr. Abraham Nottingham of Dewitt was engaged to be on Onondaga Street, near the First Methodist Church, with an open buggy, where all the parties engaged were to meet.

'TWAS A THRILLING ESCAPE

The night was favorable, it being rather dark, and the plans were all carried out as by clock-work. As the hour approached Harriet was in the chamber parlor in charge of an infant of one of Mrs. Davenport's relatives, while the parlors below were crowded with the elite, and it was necessary for her to go down and pass through the entire party to reach the outer back door, but nothing daunted, she ran the gauntlet. Throwing a shawl over her arm she took the child, and, as she passed through the company, she laid it in her mistress' lap, requesting her to hold it while she stepped out for a few minutes. She was met at the door by her colored friend, who hurried her to the place designated, where she was met by Messrs. Clarke and Owen. Leonard brought her bundle of clothes. She leaped into the buggy and was eager to be away. But here was a dilemma. She was without a bonnet and was dressed in a light evening costume. A bonnetless woman seen riding through the streets would excite suspicion. The night was cold and she would suffer in her ten-mile ride. One of the colored friends promptly pulled off his overcoat and hat, which she put on, and then apparently two gentlemen drove rapidly down Onondaga Street. Nor did they slacken speed until the haven of refuge was reached. Here she was to stay until a more secure place of concealment could be arranged. And here we will leave her and return to those she left behind her.

Harriet had been gone some fifteen or twenty minutes, when her mistress, desiring her attendance, called for her, but receiving no response, the truth suddenly flashed upon her mind. The festivities were abruptly ended. The alarm was sounded. This was before the day of the telegraph, and the fugitive was at least safe from any mode of persuit more rapid than her own flight. Livery stables were liberally patronized and scouts were sent in all directions. The Oswego packet was overhauled and searched. An express was sent to Oswego to watch the Canada boats. Spies were sent to Peterboro to watch Gerrit Smith's house and to Skaneateles to keep an eye on James Canning Fuller's premises. The next morning the chivalrous Southerner created no small stir in the quiet village of Syracuse.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

Procuring search warrants, and with the proper officer, he proceeded to search the houses of all the prominent Abolitionists from cellar to garret, while the actual conspirators stood by and laughed in their sleeves. He bought the only bowie knife in the village and made a great flourish generally, and sympathizers in his loss were plenty. He issued a handbill and posted it through the village and its vicinity. (A copy of this handbill has been deposited with the Onondaga Historical Association and accompanies this article). It describes the fugitive better than any words we can use.

Davenport had previously written a very flaming and denunciatory handbill, and it was already in print and ready to deliver, when the principal proprietor of the printing office discovered it and, on glancing over a copy, immediately directed it to be suppressed. By the advice of some of his cooler-headed friends, Davenport published the bill that is copied. The advertisement was variously received. Rough loungers about one saloon were very outspoken in their indignation after reading the description of the girl, while the prospect of reward stimulated the cupidity of some even who professed anti-slavery sentiments, but they were unable to profit by their treachery.

A systematic effort was made to discover the whereabouts of the fugitive and every device was resorted to to entrap her abductors. Hoping to obtain some clue, Leonard was arrested for larceny in stealing her clothes. When he was brought before the justice the Abolitionists and parties who were suspected kept out of the way, while Dr. Silas Bliss, a dentist in the place, who never had been known to sympathize in that direction, attended the trial and kept them posted as to the course it was taking, but so pluckily did Uncle Tom Leonard and his colored comrades bear themselves under the severe fire of Davenport's attorney that nothing was elicited, not even sufficient to convict him of the charge upon which he was arrested.

Harriet had remained at Mr. Sheppard's about a week, when a remark unwittingly dropped by Mr. Owen in the presence of a treacherous Abolitionist, indicated to him the neighborhood in which she was concealed, and a scheme was immediately concocted to proceed early in the morning and take the game and pocket the reward. Morning came and the neighborhood was scoured but the bird had flown. Mr. Sheppard was apparently in blissful ignorance of even the existence of such a girl. The posse returned from their bootless errand, cursing the traitor whom they charged had humbugged them.

And this is the manner of Harriet's second escape: On the evening upon which the plans were laid to recapture her, a mass meeting of Abolitionists was in session at the First Congregational Church—which stood where now stands Association Hall. And while the business of the evening was progressing Mr. Clarke quietly

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

passed around and collected a sum sufficient to "ship a bale of Southern goods," and laid before Hon. Gerrit Smith, who sat at the head of a pew, the route which was proposed. He replied, "Get her to my house and I will be responsible for the rest." Mr. Clarke, at the close of the meeting returned home, accompanied by Mr. Owen, and they sat down in a retired room to settle upon a further plan of action. It was finally decided to let Harriet stay a day or two longer with Mr. Sheppard, while arrangements could be made to remove her to the house of Dr. John Clarke, an uncle of Mr. Clarke, in Lebanon, Madison County. The latter was in the meantime to write to his uncle of the proposed transfer, and Mr. Owen bade him good night. Mr. Clarke sat down and wrote the letter and had just finished when a gentle tap was heard at the door, and upon opening it Mr. Owen stood before him with horror depicted upon his countenance and abruptly saluted him with "We are betrayed." He stated that during his absence a man had called at his house and inquired for him. He told Mrs. Owen that his business was of the utmost importance and that it must be done with Mr. Owen personally. She did not know where her husband was and so informed him, but his anxiety to see him seemed so great that she suspected the nature of his errand and, by gaining his confidence, succeeded in drawing from him the facts relative to the treachery. She did not know him, nor was it ever known who he was. Mr. Owen asked, "What is to be done?" Mr. Clarke's reply was, "Harriet must be removed this very night"—and, although it was near midnight, the night dark and the roads bad, these two men went on foot to Mr. Nottingham's house, some three miles out, roused him up and told him what was wanted. He immediately consented to go, if Mr. Owen would go with him. And before daylight Harriet was safely removed to the house of a trusty farmer several miles away. And soon after she was transferred to Dr. Clarke's residence by Mr. Nottingham, who took the letter before mentioned as his introduction. The doctor's family were taken by surprise, but they accepted the situation and made everything comfortable and pleasant for their charge. Here she remained three weeks. While here she learned the alphabet, and evinced a great desire to learn to read. From Lebanon she was conveyed by trusty hands to Gerrit Smith at Peterboro. Here she was generously supplied with a complete winter outfit, and while here the neighbors or visitors never suspected she was other than the fine looking lady she appeared. Mr. Smith sent her in charge of Mr. Federal Dana, a prominent citizen of Madison County, to a point opposite Kingston on the St. Lawrence. Here she embarked upon the ferry boat in presence of quite a crowd. Mr. Dana watched her progress until he saw her step on British soil, and then turned to the sur-

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

rounding crowd and informed them who the supposed lady was, and detailed some of the circumstances of the case. His statement created intense excitement and if Davenport had appeared among them he would have been roughly handled. By direction of Gerrit Smith, Mr. Dana returned to Syracuse and reported to Mr. Clarke the successful termination of the enterprise. Mr. Smith also wrote a letter to Davenport, stating what he had done for her in the way of clothing, and announcing that she was safely beyond his reach.

SLAVE-HOLDER SPOKE HIS MIND

When Davenport found the recovery of his recreant chattel hopeless he issued a long address to the public, entitling it, "A Chapter in the History of Abolitionism at Syracuse, with a glance at the principles of Abolitionism as connected with religion and morality. 'For their feet run to evil and make haste to shed blood.' Prov. I, 15." In it he roundly berated the disturbers of his peace and discussed the beauties of slavery from a benevolent and religious point of view. Some time after Harriet was safely domiciled in Canada a plot to kidnap her was detected and Tom Leonard was sent over to warn her of it.

In the spring of 1845 Mr. Clarke visited Kingston and found her married to a respectable colored man, said to be worth $1,500. She had two bright boys whom she could call her own. At first she was very reticent, suspecting espial, not recognizing Mr. Clarke, having seen him but once, and that in the darkness of the night of her escape. But soon, from some circumstances which she related, she was satisfied that he was one of her rescuers; then she was unbounded in her expressions of gratiude for her deliverance. He finally asked her if, after her experience in the rigors of the northern climate, she could return to the pleasant South and be restored to her former situation, with the assurance that no punishment would be inflicted for her actions, would she be willing to go back where she could live near her mother and sister. Placing her finger on her elbow, she replied with emphasis: "I would work my arms off up to there, before I would go back," and she added, "The greatest desire of my mother's heart is that my children may be free, and for that I have prayed."

Of the actors in this drama of social life, all are now dead. Of the colored persons engaged in it, the name of but one beside Leonard was known. That one, William H. Livingston, who died in the 'fifties, bundled up Harriet's clothes and threw them out of the window to Leonard. To the energetic management of William M. Clarke the success of the escape was mainly due.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

Within a year after this occurrence, Davenport became bankrupt and his property was scattered, and Harriet, had she responded to his desire, hypocritically expressed in his handbill, to restore her to her aged mother, would have become the inmate of some Southern harem. A few words more about the venerable colored individual, Leonard. Little is known of his early life. He was industrious and accumulated some property. After the date of our narrative he became the proprietor of a horse and dray and did business in that line until the Jerry excitement, when he, with others of his race, fearful of their safety here, fled to Canada, where he remained a year or two. He was one of the few colored citizens who were able to avail themselves of the $250 privilege of voting.

When the Rebellion broke out and a colored regiment was being recruited in Massachusetts, he was one of the first of the squad to go from here to join it. But greatly to his disappointment and grief, he was rejected by the surgeon as too old (he was more than 70 then). He was always an energetic worker on election day among his people, when the franchise was extended to them, until decrepitude confined him to the home of a friend, where he died at the age of 88.

This story includes that of William M. Clarke in practically every detail, which Mr. Clarke wrote out and which has been deposited by his descendants with the Onondaga Historical Association. William Metcalf Clarke was the father of Maj. H. Wadsworth Clarke and grandfather of Theodore W. Clarke.

ALFRED MERCER, M. D.

(By Franklin H. Chase.)

It was two years after Jerry, the slave, was rescued from the United States officers that Dr. Alfred Mercer took up his permanent residence in Syracuse. In locating in Syracuse in 1853 Dr. Mercer negotiated a partnership with Dr. Hiram Hoyt, one of the leading surgeons of this part of the State. Dr. Mercer had long been a staunch Abolitionist. And so had Dr. Hoyt. It was the day when physicians' offices were for the most part over stores in business blocks. Dr. Hoyt's office was in the Alvord Block, No. 30 South Warren Street, "two doors south of the railroad depot," upon the site of the present University Building. That office had been the place where the plans were laid for the rescue of Jerry—the meeting which was attended by Gerrit Smith and the Rev. Samuel J. May. It

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

was but natural in the atmosphere of that historic place, with two such thorough believers in abolition, that the most important national drama in the history of Syracuse should not be allowed to become a mere memory.

Dr. Mercer was something more than the man who rises to the height of his profession; something more than the scientist who peers ahead of his time, and something more than the physician wholly absorbed in his work. His usefulness to his community and his period knew no bounds. He was one of the physicians who early began the work of educating the people in medical truths. He took up the science of sanitation at an early period. He has been credited with being the first physician in Central New York to use the microscope habitually for clinical purposes, beginning about 1860. When the Geneva Medical College was removed to Syracuse in 1872, to become a department of the Syracuse University, Dr. Mercer was invited to a place in the faculty and accepted the chair of minor and clinical surgery, which he filled until 1884, when he resigned to establish and fill a chair of State medicine. He was connected with the Hospital of Good Shepherd from its inception, and was health officer of Syracuse for six years.

Born in High Halden, Kent, England, November 14, 1820, Dr. Mercer was a son of William and Mary (Dobell) Mercer, both of whom were natives of England. They came to America in 1832, but returned to England the following year. They left their youngest son, Alfred, in this country in the care of an older brother, who had already been a resident of this country for a number of years. The father died in 1851, the mother surviving until 1863.

When Dr. Mercer first saw Syracuse it was in May, 1833. He was 13, and westbound upon a packet boat upon the Erie Canal. His own description is boyishly thrilling. Said he: "The boat had passed the Lodi locks, but, in the forest between the locks and the village of Syracuse our boat struck a raft, knocking a hole in her bow and threatening to sink to the bottom of the canal, then three or four feet deep. By the energy and activity of the crew, assisted by the excited passengers, we floated safely into the Durston drydock, where the Durston Block now stands. This is all I remember of my first visit to Syracuse." But it was other visits here and the observance of the growth of the city, its spirit and attitude, which made him seek it as a home twenty years later.

After two years' study in Genesee Wesleyan Seminary, to complete his literary education, Alfred Mercer began preparations for the practice of medicine as a student in the office and under the direction of Dr. John F. Whitbeck of Lima, N. Y. He was gradu-

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

ated from the Geneva Medical College in 1845. The following year he visited his parents in England and also devoted several months to medical study and observation in the hospitals of London and Paris. On his return to this country, in 1847, he located for practice in Milwaukee, Wis. The following year he was induced to return to Western New York, where he practiced in Monroe and Livingston Counties until he came to Syracuse June 14, 1853.

Dr. Mercer early chose Montgomery Street for a home. In 1870, upon Christmas Day, that became his office, to be continued there until his death. In 1880 it also became the office of his son, Dr. A. Clifford Mercer. Other offices prior to 1870 were at 32 South Warren Street in the later 'fifties, at 49½ East Genesee Street in 1859, and at 25 Montgomery Street until 1870. In 1867 it was Mercer & Searl at 25 Montgomery Street, I. H. Searl being with Dr. Mercer. It was not until 1923 that the Mercer signs came down upon the old Montgomery Street home, then numbered 324, when the spacious old home was rebuilt by his daughter, Mrs. Ina Mercer Rice, into an office and studio building.

During his residence in Syracuse Dr. Alfred Mercer made several trips to Europe, visiting foreign hospitals and medical schools, to observe the changes and development with the advancement of medical knowledge. He also traveled quite extensively with Mrs. Mercer in this country. In 1848 Dr. Mercer was married to Miss Delia Lamphier, a daughter of Aaron Lamphier of Lima, Livingston County, N. Y. Having lost his first wife in 1887, Dr. Mercer married Mrs. Joseph Esty, nee Morehouse, of Ithaca, in 1888.

Dr. Alfred Mercer died at his old home, 324 Montgomery Street, on August 5, 1914. It was by his will that the bequest of $500 was made to "keep green in memory the heroism of the men who rescued Jerry." The children of Dr. Mercer were: Eliza, born August 24, 1850, died March 19, 1855; Alfred Clifford, born July 5, 1855; Charles Dobell, born April 7, 1858; died March 22, 1884; Fremont, born August 1, 1862, died January 11, 1874; Mary, born September 1, 1866, died January 18, 1869, and Ina Delia, born October 7, 1870.

When the removal of the Geneva Medical College to Syracuse was first under consideration in 1871, the proposition was warmly favored by the Onondaga Medical Society, which appointed a committee to represent the society in that movement, and Dr. Mercer was named its chairman. Upon the removal in 1872, besides becoming a member of its faculty, Dr. Mercer was also named its treasurer. Besides being emeritus professor of State medicine from 1895 until his death, Dr. Mercer was for nearly a quarter of a

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

century surgeon to the Hospital of the Good Shepherd, and later consulting surgeon to that hospital and also to the Syracuse Free Dispensary. Dr. Mercer was a member of the American Public Health Association. For seven years he served as president of the Syracuse Board of Health, and for five years he served under Grover Cleveland on the New York State Board of Health. The Onondaga Medical Society honored Dr. Mercer with a banquet at the end of his fiftieth year in practice and another in celebration of his ninetieth birthday.

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

ILLUSTRATIONS

Alfred Mercer, M. D.	Facing	Title	Page
Jerry Rescue (Raynor) Block in 'Eighties	Facing	Page	12
Birdseye View, Syracuse at Time of Jerry Rescue	"	"	13
Gerrit Smith	"	"	20
Rev. Samuel J. May	"	"	21
Jerry's Shackles	"	"	28
Townsend Block	"	"	29
Key to Jerry's Cell	"	"	36
Rev. J. W. Loguen	"	"	37
Dr. Hiram Hoyt	"	"	44
Dr. Lyman Clary	"	"	45
Montgomery Merrick	"	"	52
Charles Merrick	"	"	53
Slave Escape Broadside	"	"	60
Dr. Alfred Mercer When Young Man	"	"	61

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

INDEX

PAGE

Abbott, William E. 28, 34, 52
Adams, E. C. 53
Adams, Dr. J. W. 17
Agan, Patrick H. 19
Albany Argus, quoted 52
Allen, Harrison 27
Allen, Henry W. 53, 54
Alvord, Cornelius L. 53
Ames, John 52
Ames, Orson 27
Anderson, J. R. 25
Anthony, Susan B. 17, 59
Anti-Slavery Society in 1835 16
Anti-Slavery Society Meets, 1851 20
Attempt at Rescue, first 23
Baker, Henry M. 53
Baker, James 24
Baldwin, Harvey 53
Baldwin, William 53
Barnes, George 19, 28, 52
Bates, Abner 19, 22, 24, 28, 34, 52
Bennett, Miles W. 53
Bigelow, Otis 53
Blair, George 53
Bliss, Dr. Silas 63
Brigham, J. B. 28
Burleigh, W. H. 20
Burnet, Moses D. 53
Burns, Peter 56
Burt, Oliver T. 52
Carter, George 24
Chaplin, William L. 33, 34, 56
Clapp, J. M. 24, 26
Clarke, George W. 34
Clarke, H. Wadsworth 61
Clarke, William Metcalf 61, 66
Clary, Dr. Lyman 19, 52
Cobb, Alfred 28
Cobb, Ira 25, 27, 28, 34
Comstock, George F. 53
Congregational Church 17, 18, 22, 27, 33, 34, 36
Cook, Maj. William A. 61
Crandall, William L. 28, 56
Crittenden, John J., in Syracuse, 1851 36
Davenport, J. 60
Davis, Caleb 24, 26, 27, 44, 45, 50
Davis, James 24, 26, 27, 44, 45
Davis, Thomas T. 17, 18, 53
Dillaye, Stephen D. 53
Episcopal bell not rung 22
Field, Lemuel 24
Fillmore, President, in Syracuse, 1851 35
First Presbyterian Church schism 17
Foote, C. C. 25
Forbes, John G. 28, 53
Foster, Samuel S. 35

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

INDEX

PAGE

Friends of the Union 21
Fugitive Slave Law, antagonism 8
" " " resolutions against 19, 20
" " " why hated in North 5
Fuller, James Canning 24, 62
Gardiner, William C., Sheriff 50
Garrison, William Lloyd 17, 29, 50
George, Joseph 27
Gere, Robert 19
Gibbs, Leonard, Jerry's lawyer 23, 25
Gifford, Henry 52
Gould, Phares 53
Graham, John A., Sec'y Navy, in Syracuse 36
Gray, William 24, 50
Green, Beriah 17, 59
Green, George A. 53
Haight, Seth 28
Hall, Johnson 53
Hallenbeck, Peter 24, 26, 27, 51
Hawley, Lewis T. 33
Held, Ernst, reminiscences 56
Higgins, Benjamin L. 53
Hillis, D. D. 25, 28
Holmes, S. N., reollections 35
House, Sylvester, police justice 23, 53
Hovey, Alfred H., Mayor 19
Hoyt, Dr. Hiram 24, 25, 26, 31, 33, 44, 52, 56, 66
Hoyt, Jason S. 24, 26, 27, 44, 45
Hunt, Edward K. 24
Jackson, Prince 27
Jerry, arrival in Syracuse 29
" captured 22
" described 51
" examination of 25, 32
" who he was 43, 50
Jerry Rescue, argument for 47
" " celebration of 58
" " historic 5
" " plan of 24
" " story of 25, 32, 36, 38, 41
Johnson, Parrish B., recollections 37
Johnson, Willard 53
Jones, John W. 53
Journal, quoted 52
Kellogg, Daniel 53
King, Sereno F. 32
Kingsley, Lyman 19
Kinney, Benjamin P. 53
Law and Order resolutions 54
Lawrence, J. R., U. S. Dist. Atty. 23, 36, 52, 53
Lear, James 23, 28
Leavenworth, E. W. 19, 52
Lee, Rev. Luther 17, 31
Leonard, Charles 52
Leonard, Tom 60, 63
Liberty Party 22
Lilly, Peter 43

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

INDEX

PAGE

Livingston, William H. 65
Loguen, Rev. J. W. 18, 19, 24, 27, 34, 38
Lowell, Russell 23
Lynch, James 53
Mann, Horace 17
Mansfield, L. D. 25
Mass Meeting, October, 1851 ..... 28, 45
Masson, Thomas M. 53
May, Rev. Samuel J., speech of 46
May, Rev. Samuel J. 15, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 38, 40, 44, 45, 53, 58, 59, 66
McDougall, Daniel 52
Mead, Samuel 52
Memorial meeting 28
Mercer, Dr. Alfred 29, 66
Merrick, Charles, reminiscences 31, 34
Merrick, Montgomery 23, 24, 28, 32
Methodist Church schism 17
Mexican War 11
Mills, Mrs. C. D. B. 29
Mills, Mrs. C. D. B., reminiscences 58
Moffett, Ella B., article on rescue 43
Morgan, LeRoy 28
Mott, Lucretia 29, 58
Noble, L. P. 24
Nottingham, Abraham 18, 62
Noxon, B. Davis 53
Nye, Judge J. W. 28
Ormsby, Henry 53
Owen, John B. 61
Parsons, James 24
Pease, Dr. R. W. 24, 59
Phillips, E. S. 53
Pillsbury, Parker 59
Pope, Charles 31
Porter, Stephen 27
Powell, Harriet, escaped slave 17, 59
Pratt, Judge Daniel 17, 18
Prendergast, Capt. Edward R. 24, 43, 50, 53
Putnam, Hiram 19, 28, 52
Raymond, Rev. R. R. 19, 20, 24, 28
Raynor Block 23, 25
Redfield, Lewis H. 53
Reed, Enoch 28
Rhoades, Hervey 53
Robbins, Mrs. Mahala 42
Rust, Philo N. 60
Sabine, Joseph F., U. S. Commissioner 22, 25, 32, 36, 40, 41, 50, 53
Sabine, Mrs. Margaret, recollections 40
Salisbury L. H. 28
Salmon, W S. 27, 28
Sedgwick, Charles B. 19, 20, 28, 52
Seward, William H. 27, 52, 53
Shattuck, Henry 53
Sheldon, Hervey 25
Slavery, early opponents 6

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

INDEX

PAGE

Slavery, first introduced 5
" Missouri compromise 9
" opposition to 5
" political issue 7
" sentimental changes 6
" States pass laws on negroes 14
" Texas complications 10
Smith, Gerrit 17, 21, 22, 24, 25, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 50, 59, 62
" " on Fugitive Slave Law 54
" " Ernst Held reminiscences of 56
Smith, Vivus W. 17, 18, 19
Snow, P. H. 20
Spencer, Israel S. 53
Spencer, Thomas 53
Stanton, Rufus 53
Stewart, Alvan 17
Stickney, Washington 24
Strong, Gurney S., article by 49
Summers, Moses 27
Stuart, Oliver C. 53
Syracuse House 60
Syracuse, in 'thirties 15
Teall, Oliver 19
Thomas, John 19
Thomas, Samuel 24
Thompson, William 27
Thorp, Alanson 53
Townsend Block 22, 41
Underground Railroad 18, 31, 34, 38, 50
Vandenburgh, Col. Origen 24, 43, 50
Vigilance Committee 19, 20, 22
Ward, Rev. Samuel R. 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 32
Washburn, R. W. 52
Washington Union, quoted 52
Watkins, Susie 42
Watress, W. M. 53
Watson, Mrs. Lucy, recollections 42
Watson, W. H. 53
Way, Peter 23
Webster, Daniel 21, 49
Webster, Daniel, speech 21, 36, 38, 48
Wesleyan Methodist Church 31
Wheaton, Charles A. 19, 22, 24, 28, 34, 52, 56
Wheaton, Horace 19
White, Horace 31, 34
White, Thomas G. 24
Wilcox, Grandison 54
Wilkinson, John 17, 18, 28
Williams, John 19
Williamson, Joseph 53
Williston, Charles F. 22
Williston, Charles F., recollections 29
Woodruff, Charles 53
Woodruff, Jason C. 19, 45
Wyman, John F. 53
Yoe, R. A. 52

THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM